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THE WORKS OF

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

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THE WORKS OF

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

SOUTH SEA YARNS

VOLUME I

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THE WRECKER

WRITTEN

IN COLLABORATION WITH

LLOYD OSBOURNE

VOLUME I

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PROLOGUE

PROLOGUE

IN THE MARQUESAS

It was about three o'clock of a winter's afternoon in Tai-o-hae, the French capital and port of entry of the Marquesas Islands. The trades blew strong and squally; the surf roared loud on the shingle beach; and the fifty-ton schooner of war, that carries the flag and influence of France about the islands of the cannibal group, rolled at her moorings under Prison Hill. The clouds hung low and black on the surrounding amphitheatre of mountains; rain had fallen earlier in the day, real tropic rain, a waterspout for violence; and the green and gloomy brow of the mountain was still seamed with many silver threads of torrent.

In these hot and healthy islands winter is but a name. The rain had not refreshed, nor could the wind invigorate, the dwellers of Tai-o-hae: away at one end, indeed, the commandant was directing some changes in the residency garden beyond Prison Hill; and the gardeners, being all convicts, had no choice but to continue to obey. All other folks slumbered

and took their rest: Vaekehu, the native Queen, in her trim house under the rustling palms; the Tahitian commissary, in his be-flagged official residence; the merchants, in their deserted stores; and even the club-servant in the club, his head fallen forward on the bottle-counter, under the map of the world and the cards of navy officers. In the whole length of the single shoreside street, with its scattered board houses looking to the sea, its grateful shade of palms and green jungle of puraos, no moving figure could be seen. Only, at the end of the rickety pier, that once (in the prosperous days of the American rebellion) was used to groan under the cotton of John Hart, there might have been spied upon a pile of lumber the famous tattooed white man, the living curiosity of Tai-o-hae.

His eyes were open, staring down the bay. He saw the mountains droop, as they approached the entrance, and break down in cliffs: the surf boil white round the two sentinel islets; and between, on the narrow bight of blue horizon, Ua-pu upraise the ghost of her pinnacled mountain-tops. But his mind would take no account of these familiar features; as he dodged in and out along the frontier line of sleep and waking, memory would serve him with broken fragments of the past: brown faces and white, of skipper and shipmate, king and chief, would arise before his mind and vanish; he would recall old voyages, old landfalls in the hour of dawn; he would hear again the drums beat for a man-eating festival; perhaps he would summon up the form of that island

princess for the love of whom he had submitted his body to the cruel hands of the tattooer, and now sat on the lumber, at the pier-end of Tai-o-hae, so strange a figure of a European. Or perhaps, from yet further back, sounds and scents of England and his childhood might assail him: the merry clamour of cathedral bells, the broom upon the foreland, the song of the river on the weir.

It is bold water at the mouth of the bay; you can steer a ship about either sentinel, close enough to toss a biscuit on the rocks. Thus it chanced that, as the tattooed man sat dozing and dreaming, he was startled into wakefulness and animation by the appearance of a flying jib beyond the western islet. Two more headsails followed; and before the tattooed man had scrambled to his feet, a topsail schooner, of some hundred tons, had luffed about the sentinel, and was standing up the bay, close-hauled.

The sleeping city awakened by enchantment. Natives appeared upon all sides, hailing each other with the magic cry 'Ehippy'—ship; the Queen stepped forth on her verandah, shading her eyes under a hand that was a miracle of the fine art of tattooing; the commandant broke from his domestic convicts and ran into the residency for his glass; the harbour-master, who was also the gaoler, came speeding down the Prison Hill; the seventeen brown Kanakas and the French boatswain's mate, that make up the complement of the war-schooner, crowded on the forward deck; and the various

English, Americans, Germans, Poles, Corsicans, and Scots—the merchants and the clerks of Tai-o-hae—deserted their places of business, and gathered, according to invariable custom, on the road before the club.

So quickly did these dozen whites collect, so short are the distances in Tai-o-hae, that they were already exchanging guesses as to the nationality and business of the strange vessel, before she had gone about upon her second board towards the anchorage. A moment after, English colours were broken out at the main truck.

'I told you she was a Johnny Bull—knew it by her headsails,' said an evergreen old salt, still qualified (if he could anywhere have found an owner unacquainted with his story) to adorn another quarter-deck and lose another ship.

'She has American lines, anyway,' said the astute Scots engineer of the gin-mill; 'it 's my belief she's a yacht.'

'That 's it,' said the old salt, 'a yacht! look at her davits, and the boat over the stern.'

'A yacht in your eye!' said a Glasgow voice. 'Look at her red ensign! A yacht! not much she isn't!'

'You can close the store, anyway, Tom,' observed a gentlemanly German. '*Bon jour, mon Prince!*' he added, as a dark, intelligent native cantered by on a neat chestnut. '*Vous allez boire un verre de bière?*'

But Prince Stanila Moanatini, the only reasonably

busy human creature on the island, was riding hot-spur to view this morning's landslip on the mountain road; the sun already visibly declined; night was imminent; and if he would avoid the perils of darkness and precipice, and the fear of the dead, the haunters of the jungle, he must for once decline a hospitable invitation. Even had he been minded to alight, it presently appeared there would be difficulty as to the refreshment offered.

'Beer!' cried the Glasgow voice. 'No such a thing; I tell you there 's only eight bottles in the club! Here 's the first time I 've seen British colours in this port! and the man that sails under them has got to drink that beer.'

The proposal struck the public mind as fair, though far from cheering; for some time back, indeed, the very name of beer had been a sound of sorrow in the club, and the evenings had passed in dolorous computation.

'Here is Havens,' said one, as if welcoming a fresh topic.—'What do you think of her, Havens?'

'I don't think,' replied Havens, a tall, bland, cool-looking, leisurely Englishman, attired in spotless duck, and deliberately dealing with a cigarette. 'I may say I know. She 's consigned to me from Auckland by Donald and Edenborough. I am on my way aboard.'

'What ship is she?' asked the ancient mariner.

'Haven't an idea,' returned Havens. 'Some tramp they have chartered.'

With that he placidly resumed his walk, and was

soon seated in the stern-sheets of a whaleboat manned by uproarious Kanakas, himself daintily perched out of the way of the least maculation, giving his commands in an unobtrusive, dinner-table tone of voice, and sweeping neatly enough alongside the schooner.

A weather-beaten captain received him at the gangway.

'You are consigned to us, I think,' said he. 'I am Mr. Havens.'

'That is right, sir,' replied the captain, shaking hands. 'You will find the owner, Mr. Dodd, below. Mind the fresh paint on the house.'

Havens stepped along the alley-way, and descended the ladder into the main cabin.

'Mr. Dodd, I believe,' said he, addressing a smallish, bearded gentleman, who sat writing at the table. —'Why,' he cried, 'it isn't Loudon Dodd?'

'Myself, my dear fellow,' replied Mr. Dodd, springing to his feet with companionable alacrity. 'I had a half-hope it might be you, when I found your name on the papers. Well, there 's no change in you; still the same placid, fresh-looking Britisher.'

'I can't return the compliment; for you seem to have become a Britisher yourself,' said Havens.

'I promise you, I am quite unchanged,' returned Dodd. 'The red tablecloth at the top of the stick is not my flag; it 's my partner's. He is not dead, but sleepeth. There he is,' he added, pointing to a bust which formed one of the numerous unexpected ornaments of that unusual cabin.

Havens politely studied it. 'A fine bust,' said he; 'and a very nice-looking fellow.'

'Yes; he 's a good fellow,' said Dodd. 'He runs me now. It 's all his money.'

'He doesn't seem to be particularly short of it,' added the other, peering with growing wonder round the cabin.

'His money—my taste,' said Dodd. 'The black walnut bookshelves are old English; the books all mine—mostly Renaissance French. You should see how the beach-combers wilt away when they go round them, looking for a change of seaside library novels. The mirrors are genuine Venice; that 's a good piece in the corner. The daubs are mine—and his; the mudding mine.'

'Mudding? What is that?' asked Havens.

'These bronzes,' replied Dodd. 'I began life as a sculptor.'

'Yes; I remember something about that,' said the other. 'I think, too, you said you were interested in Californian real estate.'

'Surely I never went so far as that,' said Dodd. 'Interested? I guess not. Involved, perhaps. I was born an artist; I never took an interest in anything but art. If I were to pile up this old schooner to-morrow,' he added, 'I declare I believe I would try the thing again!'

'Insured?' inquired Havens.

'Yes,' responded Dodd. 'There 's some fool in 'Frisco who insures us, and comes down like a wolf on the fold on the profits; but we 'll get even with him some day.'

'Well, I suppose it 's all right about the cargo,' said Havens.

'O, I suppose so!' replied Dodd. 'Shall we go into the papers?'

'We 'll have all to-morrow, you know,' said Havens; 'and they 'll be rather expecting you at the club. *C'est l'heure de l'absinthe.* Of course, Loudon, you 'll dine with me later on?'

Mr. Dodd signified his acquiescence; drew on his white coat, not without a trifling difficulty, for he was a man of middle age, and well-to-do; arranged his beard and moustaches at one of the Venetian mirrors; and, taking a broad felt hat, led the way through the trade-room into the ship's waist.

The stern boat was waiting alongside—a boat of an elegant model, with cushions and polished hard-wood fittings.

'You steer,' observed Loudon. 'You know the best place to land.'

'I never like to steer another man's boat,' replied Havens.

'Call it my partner's, and cry quits,' returned Loudon, getting nonchalantly down the side.

Havens followed and took the yoke lines without further protest.

'I am sure I don't know how you make this pay,' he said. 'To begin with, she is too big for the trade, to my taste; and then you carry so much style.'

'I don't know that she does pay,' returned Loudon. 'I never pretend to be a business man. My partner

appears happy; and the money is all his, as I told you; I only bring the want of business habits.'

'You rather like the berth, I suppose?' suggested Havens.

'Yes,' said Loudon; 'it seems odd, but I rather do.'

While they were yet on board, the sun had dipped; the sunset gun (a rifle) had cracked from the war-schooner, and the colours had been handed down. Dusk was deepening as they came ashore; and the *Cercle International* (as the club is officially and significantly named) began to shine, from under its low verandahs, with the light of many lamps. The good hours of the twenty-four drew on; the hateful, poisonous day-fly of Nukahiva was beginning to desist from its activity; the land-breeze came in refreshing draughts; and the club-men gathered together for the hour of absinthe. To the commandant himself, to the man whom he was then contending with at billiards—a trader from the next island, honorary member of the club, and once carpenter's mate on board a Yankee war-ship—to the doctor of the port, to the Brigadier of Gendarmerie, to the opium-farmer, and to all the white men whom the tide of commerce, or the chances of shipwreck and desertion, had stranded on the beach of Tai-o-hae, Mr. Loudon Dodd was formally presented; by all (since he was a man of pleasing exterior, smooth ways, and an unexceptionable flow of talk, whether in French or English) he was excellently well received; and presently, with one of the last eight

bottles of beer on a table at his elbow, found himself the rather silent centre-piece of a voluble group on the verandah.

Talk in the South Seas is all upon one pattern; it is a wide ocean, indeed, but a narrow world: you shall never talk long and not hear the name of Bully Hayes, a naval hero whose exploits and deserved extinction left Europe cold; commerce will be touched on, copra, shell, perhaps cotton or fungus; but in a far-away, dilettante fashion, as by men not deeply interested; through all, the names of schooners and their captains will keep coming and going, thick as may-flies; and news of the last shipwreck will be placidly exchanged and debated. To a stranger, this conversation will at first seem scarcely brilliant; but he will soon catch the tone; and by the time he shall have moved a year or so in the island world, and come across a good number of the schooners, so that every captain's name calls up a figure in pyjamas or white duck, and becomes used to a certain laxity of moral tone which prevails (as in memory of Mr. Hayes) on smuggling, ship-scuttling, barratry, piracy, the labour trade, and other kindred fields of human activity, he will find Polynesia no less amusing and no less instructive than Pall Mall or Paris.

Mr. Loudon Dodd, though he was new to the group of the Marquesas, was already an old, salted trader; he knew the ships and the captains; he had assisted, in other islands, at the first steps of some career of which he now heard the culmination, or (*vice versâ*) he had brought with him from further

south the end of some story which had begun in Tai-o-hae. Among other matter of interest, like other arrivals in the South Seas, he had a wreck to announce. The *John T. Richards*, it appeared, had met the fate of other island schooners.

'Dickinson piled her up on Palmerston Island,' Dodd announced.

'Who were the owners?' inquired one of the clubmen.

'O, the usual parties!' returned Loudon, 'Capsicum and Co.'

A smile and a glance of intelligence went round the group; and perhaps Loudon gave voice to the general sentiment by remarking—

'Talk of good business! I know nothing better than a schooner, a competent captain, and a sound reliable reef.'

'Good business! There's no such a thing!' said the Glasgow man. 'Nobody makes anything but the missionaries—dash it!'

'I don't know,' said another; 'there's a good deal in opium.'

'It's a good job to strike a tabooed pearl-island—say, about the fourth year,' remarked a third, 'skim the whole lagoon on the sly, and up stick and away before the French get wind of you.'

'A pig nokket of cold is good,' observed a German.

'There's something in wrecks, too,' said Havens. 'Look at that man in Honolulu, and the ship that went ashore on Waikiki Reef; it was blowing a kona, hard; and she began to break up as soon as

she touched. Lloyd's agent had her sold inside an hour; and before dark, when she went to pieces in earnest, the man that bought her had feathered his nest. Three more hours of daylight, and he might have retired from business. As it was, he built a house on Beretania Street, and called it after the ship.'

'Yes, there 's something in wrecks sometimes,' said the Glasgow voice; 'but not often.'

'As a general rule, there 's deuced little in anything,' said Havens.

'Well, I believe that 's a Christian fact,' cried the other. 'What I want is a secret, get hold of a rich man by the right place, and make him squeal.'

'I suppose you know it 's not thought to be the ticket,' returned Havens.

'I don't care for that; it 's good enough for me,' cried the man from Glasgow, stoutly. 'The only devil of it is, a fellow can never find a secret in a place like the South Seas: only in London and Paris.'

'M'Gibbon 's been reading some dime novel, I suppose,' said one club-man.

'He 's been reading *Aurora Floyd*,' remarked another.

'And what if I have?' cried M'Gibbon. 'It 's all true. Look at the newspapers! It 's just your confounded ignorance that sets you snickering. I tell you, it 's as much a trade as underwriting, and a dashed sight more honest.'

The sudden acrimony of these remarks called

Loudon (who was a man of peace) from his reserve. 'It 's rather singular,' said he, 'but I seem to have practised about all these means of livelihood.'

'Tit you effer find a nokket?' inquired the inarticulate German, eagerly.

'No. I have been most kinds of fool in my time,' returned Loudon, 'but not the gold-digging variety. Every man has a sane spot somewhere.'

'Well, then,' suggested some one, 'did you ever smuggle opium?'

'Yes, I did,' said Loudon.

'Was there money in that?'

'All the way,' responded Loudon.

'And perhaps you bought a wreck?' asked another.

'Yes, sir,' said Loudon.

'How did that pan out?' pursued the questioner.

'Well, mine was a peculiar kind of wreck,' replied Loudon. 'I don't know, on the whole, that I can recommend that branch of industry.'

'Did she break up?' asked some one.

'I guess it was rather I that broke down,' says Loudon. 'Head not big enough.'

'Ever try the blackmail?' inquired Havens.

'Simple as you see me sitting here!' responded Dodd.

'Good business?'

'Well, I 'm not a lucky man, you see,' returned the stranger. 'It ought to have been good.'

'You had a secret?' asked the Glasgow man.

'As big as the State of Texas.'

'And the other man was rich?'

'He wasn't exactly Jay Gould, but I guess he could buy these islands if he wanted.'

'Why, what was wrong, then? Couldn't you get hands on him?'

'It took time, but I had him cornered at last; and then——'

'What then?'

'The speculation turned bottom up. I became the man's bosom friend.'

'The deuce you did!'

'He couldn't have been particular, you mean?' asked Dodd pleasantly. 'Well, no; he's a man of rather large sympathies.'

'If you're done talking nonsense, Loudon,' said Havens, 'let's be getting to my place for dinner.'

Outside, the night was full of the roaring of the surf. Scattered lights glowed in the green thicket. Native women came by twos and threes out of the darkness, smiled and ogled the two whites, perhaps wooed them with a strain of laughter, and went by again, bequeathing to the air a heady perfume of palm-oil and frangipani blossom. From the club to Mr. Havens's residence was but a step or two, and to any dweller in Europe they must have seemed steps in fairyland. If such an one could but have followed our two friends into the wide-verandahed house, sat down with them in the cool trellised room, where the wine shone on the lamp-lighted table-cloth; tasted of their exotic food—the raw fish, the bread-fruit, the cooked bananas, the roast pig served

with the inimitable miti, and that king of delicacies, palm-tree salad; seen and heard by fits and starts, now peering round the corner of the door, now railing within against invisible assistants, a certain comely young native lady in a sacque, who seemed too modest to be a member of the family, and too imperious to be less; and then if such an one were whisked again through space to Upper Tooting, or wherever else he honoured the domestic gods, 'I have had a dream,' I think he would say, as he sat up, rubbing his eyes, in the familiar chimney-corner chair, 'I have had a dream of a place, and I declare I believe it must be heaven.' But to Dodd and his entertainer, all this amenity of the tropic night, and all these dainties of the island table, were grown things of custom; and they fell to meat like men who were hungry, and drifted into idle talk like men who were a trifle bored.

The scene in the club was referred to.

'I never heard you talk so much nonsense, Loudon,' said the host.

'Well, it seemed to me there was sulphur in the air, so I talked for talking,' returned the other. 'But it was none of it nonsense.'

'Do you mean to say it was true?' cried Havens —'that about the opium and the wreck, and the blackmailing, and the man who became your friend?'

'Every last word of it,' said Loudon.

'You seem to have been seeing life,' returned the other.

'Yes, it's a queer yarn,' said his friend; 'if you think you would like, I'll tell it you.'

Here follows the yarn of Loudon Dodd, not as he told it to his friend, but as he subsequently wrote it.

THE YARN

THE YARN

CHAPTER I

A SOUND COMMERCIAL EDUCATION

THE beginning of this yarn is my poor father's character. There never was a better man, nor a handsomer, nor (in my view) a more unhappy—unhappy in his business, in his pleasures, in his place of residence, and (I am sorry to say it) in his son. He had begun life as a land-surveyor, soon became interested in real estate, branched off into many other speculations, and had the name of one of the smartest men in the State of Muskegon. 'Dodd has a big head,' people used to say; but I was never so sure of his capacity. His luck, at least, was beyond doubt for long; his assiduity, always. He fought in that daily battle of money-grubbing, with a kind of sad-eyed loyalty like a martyr's; rose early, ate fast, came home dispirited and over-weary, even from success; grudged himself all pleasure, if his nature was capable of taking any, which I sometimes wondered; and laid out, upon some deal in wheat or corner in aluminium, the essence of which was little

better than highway robbery, treasures of conscientiousness and self-denial.

Unluckily, I never cared a cent for anything but art, and never shall. My idea of man's chief end was to enrich the world with things of beauty, and have a fairly good time myself while doing so. I do not think I mentioned that second part, which is the only one I have managed to carry out; but my father must have suspected the suppression, for he branded the whole affair as self-indulgence.

'Well,' I remember crying once, 'and what is your life? You are only trying to get money, and to get it from other people at that.'

He sighed bitterly (which was very much his habit), and shook his poor head at me.

'Ah, Loudon, Loudon!' said he, 'you boys think yourselves very smart. But, struggle as you please, a man has to work in this world. He must be an honest man or a thief, Loudon.'

You can see for yourself how vain it was to argue with my father. The despair that seized upon me after such an interview was, besides, embittered by remorse; for I was at times petulant, but he invariably gentle; and I was fighting, after all, for my own liberty and pleasure, he singly for what he thought to be my good. And all the time he never despaired. 'There is good stuff in you, Loudon,' he would say; 'there is the right stuff in you. Blood will tell, and you will come right in time. I am not afraid my boy will ever disgrace me; I am only vexed he should sometimes talk nonsense.' And

then he would pat my shoulder or my hand with a kind of motherly way he had, very affecting in a man so strong and beautiful.

As soon as I had graduated from the high school, he packed me off to the Muskegon Commercial Academy. You are a foreigner, and you will have a difficulty in accepting the reality of this seat of education. I assure you before I begin that I am wholly serious. The place really existed, possibly exists to-day: we were proud of it in the State, as something exceptionally nineteenth-century and civilised; and my father, when he saw me to the cars, no doubt considered he was putting me in a straight line for the Presidency and the New Jerusalem.

'Loudon,' said he, 'I am now giving you a chance that Julius Cæsar could not have given to his son—a chance to see life as it is, before your own turn comes to start in earnest. Avoid rash speculation, try to behave like a gentleman; and if you will take my advice, confine yourself to a safe, conservative business in railroads. Breadstuffs are tempting, but very dangerous; I would not try breadstuffs at your time of life; but you may feel your way a little in other commodities. Take a pride to keep your books posted, and never throw good money after bad. There, my dear boy, kiss me good-bye; and never forget that you are an only chick, and that your dad watches your career with fond suspense.'

The commercial college was a fine, roomy establishment, pleasantly situate among woods. The air

was healthy, the food excellent, the premium high. Electric wires connected it (to use the words of the prospectus) with 'the various world centres.' The reading-room was well supplied with 'commercial organs.' The talk was that of Wall Street; and the pupils (from fifty to a hundred lads) were principally engaged in rooking or trying to rook one another for nominal sums in what was called 'college paper.' We had class hours, indeed, in the morning, when we studied German, French, book-keeping, and the like goodly matters; but the bulk of our day and the gist of the education centred in the exchange, where we were taught to gamble in produce and securities. Since not one of the participants possessed a bushel of wheat or a dollar's worth of stock, legitimate business was of course impossible from the beginning. It was cold-drawn gambling, without colour or disguise. Just that which is the impediment and destruction of all genuine commercial enterprise, just that we were taught with every luxury of stage effect. Our simulacrum of a market was ruled by the real markets outside, so that we might experience the course and vicissitude of prices. We must keep books, and our ledgers were overhauled at the month's end by the principal or his assistants. To add a spice of verisimilitude, 'college paper' (like poker chips) had an actual marketable value. It was bought for each pupil by anxious parents and guardians at the rate of one cent for the dollar. The same pupil, when his education was complete, resold, at the same figure,

so much as was left him to the college; and even in the midst of his curriculum, a successful operator would sometimes realise a proportion of his holding, and stand a supper on the sly in the neighbouring hamlet. In short, if there was ever a worse education, it must have been in that academy where Oliver met Charles Bates.

When I was first guided into the exchange to have my desk pointed out by one of the assistant teachers, I was overwhelmed by the clamour and confusion. Certain blackboards at the other end of the building were covered with figures continually replaced. As each new set appeared, the pupils swayed to and fro, and roared out aloud with a formidable and to me quite meaningless vociferation; leaping at the same time upon the desks and benches, signalling with arms and heads, and scribbling briskly in note-books. I thought I had never beheld a scene more disagreeable; and when I considered that the whole traffic was illusory, and all the money then upon the market would scarce have sufficed to buy a pair of skates, I was at first astonished, although not for long. Indeed, I had no sooner called to mind how grown-up men and women of considerable estate will lose their temper about halfpenny points, than (making an immediate allowance for my fellow-students) I transferred the whole of my astonishment to the assistant teacher, who—poor gentleman—had quite forgot to show me to my desk, and stood in the midst of this hurly-burly, absorbed and seemingly transported.

'Look, look,' he shouted in my ear; 'a falling market! The bears have had it all their own way since yesterday.'

'It can't matter,' I replied, making him hear with difficulty, for I was unused to speak in such a babel, 'since it is all fun.'

'True,' said he; 'and you must always bear in mind that the real profit is in the book-keeping. I trust, Dodd, to be able to congratulate you upon your books. You are to start in with ten thousand dollars of college paper, a very liberal figure, which should see you through the whole curriculum, if you keep to a safe, conservative business. . . . Why, what's that?' he broke off, once more attracted by the changing figures on the board. 'Seven, four, three! Dodd, you are in luck: this is the most spirited rally we have had this term. And to think that the same scene is now transpiring in New York, Chicago, St. Louis, and rival business centres! For two cents, I would try a flutter with the boys myself,' he cried, rubbing his hands; 'only it's against the regulations.'

'What would you do, sir?' I asked.

'Do?' he cried, with glittering eyes. 'Buy for all I was worth!'

'Would that be a safe, conservative business?' I inquired, as innocent as a lamb.

He looked daggers at me. 'See that sandy-haired man in glasses?' he asked, as if to change the subject. 'That's Billson, our most prominent undergraduate. We build confidently on Billson's future.

You could not do better, Dodd, than follow Billson.'

Presently after, in the midst of a still growing tumult, the figures coming and going more busily than ever on the board, and the hall resounding like Pandemonium with the howls of operators, the assistant teacher left me to my own resources at my desk. The next boy was posting up his ledger, figuring his morning's loss, as I discovered later on; and from this ungenial task he was readily diverted by the sight of a new face.

'Say, Freshman,' he said, 'what's your name? What? Son of Big Head Dodd? What's your figure? Ten thousand? O, you're away up! What a soft-headed clam you must be to touch your books!'

I asked him what else I could do, since the books were to be examined once a month.

'Why, you galoot, you get a clerk!' cries he. 'One of our dead beats—that's all they're here for. If you're a successful operator, you need never do a stroke of work in this old college.'

The noise had now become deafening; and my new friend, telling me that some one had certainly 'gone down,' that he must know the news, and that he would bring me a clerk when he returned, buttoned his coat and plunged into the tossing throng. It proved that he was right: some one had gone down; a prince had fallen in Israel; the corner in lard had proved fatal to the mighty; and the clerk who was brought back to keep my books, spare me all work, and get all my share of the education,

at a thousand dollars a month, college paper (ten dollars, United States currency) was no other than the prominent Billson whom I could do no better than follow. The poor lad was very unhappy. It 's the only good thing I have to say for Muskegon Commercial College, that we were all, even the small fry, deeply mortified to be posted as defaulters; and the collapse of a merchant prince like Billson, who had ridden pretty high in his days of prosperity, was, of course, particularly hard to bear. But the spirit of make-believe conquered even the bitterness of recent shame; and my clerk took his orders, and fell to his new duties, with decorum and civility.

Such were my first impressions in this absurd place of education; and, to be frank, they were far from disagreeable. As long as I was rich, my evenings and afternoons would be my own; the clerk must keep my books, the clerk could do the jostling and bawling in the exchange; and I could turn my mind to landscape-painting and Balzac's novels, which were then my two pre-occupations. To remain rich, then, became my problem; or, in other words, to do a safe, conservative line of business. I am looking for that line still; and I believe the nearest thing to it in this imperfect world is the sort of speculation sometimes insidiously proposed to childhood, in the formula, 'Heads I win; tails you lose.' Mindful of my father's parting words, I turned my attention timidly to railroads; and for a month or so maintained a position of inglorious security, dealing for small amounts in the most inert

stocks, and bearing (as best I could) the scorn of my hired clerk. One day I had ventured a little further by way of experiment; and, in the sure expectation they would continue to go down, sold several thousand dollars of Pan-Handle Preference (I think it was). I had no sooner made this venture than some fools in New York began to bull the market; Pan-Handles rose like a balloon; and in the inside of half an hour I saw my position compromised. Blood will tell, as my father said; and I stuck to it gallantly: all afternoon I continued selling that infernal stock, all afternoon it continued skying. I suppose I had come (a frail cockle-shell) athwart the hawse of Jay Gould; and, indeed, I think I remember that this vagary in the market proved subsequently to be the first move in a considerable deal. That evening, at least, the name of H. Loudon Dodd held the first rank in our collegiate gazette, and I and Billson (once more thrown upon the world) were competing for the same clerkship. The present object takes the present eye. My disaster, for the moment, was the more conspicuous; and it was I that got the situation. So, you see, even in Muskegon Commercial College there were lessons to be learned.

For my own part, I cared very little whether I lost or won at a game so random, so complex, and so dull; but it was sorry news to write to my poor father, and I employed all the resources of my eloquence. I told him (what was the truth) that the successful boys had none of the education; so

that, if he wished me to learn, he should rejoice at my misfortune. I went on (not very consistently) to beg him to set me up again, when I would solemnly promise to do a safe business in reliable railroads. Lastly (becoming somewhat carried away), I assured him I was totally unfit for business, and implored him to take me away from this abominable place, and let me go to Paris to study art. He answered briefly, gently, and sadly, telling me the vacation was near at hand, when we could talk things over.

When the time came, he met me at the depot, and I was shocked to see him looking older. He seemed to have no thought but to console me and restore (what he supposed I had lost) my courage. I must not be down-hearted; many of the best men had made a failure in the beginning. I told him I had no head for business, and his kind face darkened. 'You must not say that, Loudon,' he replied; 'I will never believe my son to be a coward.'

'But I don't like it,' I pleaded. 'It hasn't got any interest for me, and art has. I know I could do more in art,' and I reminded him that a successful painter gains large sums; that a picture of Meissonier's would sell for many thousand dollars.

'And do you think, Loudon,' he replied, 'that a man who can paint a thousand-dollar picture has not grit enough to keep his end up in the stock market? No, sir; this Mason (of whom you speak) or our own American Bierstadt—if you were to put them down in a wheat-pit to-morrow, they would show

their mettle. Come, Loudon, my dear; heaven knows I have no thought but your own good, and I will offer you a bargain. I start you again next term with ten thousand dollars; show yourself a man, and double it, and then (if you still wish to go to Paris, which I know you won't) I'll let you go. But to let you run away as if you were whipped, is what I am too proud to do.'

My heart leaped at this proposal, and then sank again. It seemed easier to paint a Meissonier on the spot than to win ten thousand dollars on that mimic stock exchange. Nor could I help reflecting on the singularity of such a test for a man's capacity to be a painter. I ventured even to comment on this.

He sighed deeply. 'You forget, my dear,' said he, 'I am a judge of the one, and not of the other. You might have the genius of Bierstadt himself, and I would be none the wiser.'

'And then,' I continued, 'it 's scarcely fair. The other boys are helped by their people, who telegraph and give them pointers. There 's Jim Costello, who never budges without a word from his father in New York. And then, don't you see, if anybody is to win, somebody must lose?'

'I 'll keep you posted,' cried my father, with unusual animation; 'I did not know it was allowed. I 'll wire you in the office cipher, and we 'll make it a kind of partnership business, Loudon:—Dodd and Son, eh?' and he patted my shoulder and repeated, 'Dodd and Son, Dodd and Son,' with the kindliest amusement.

If my father was to give me pointers, and the commercial college was to be a stepping-stone to Paris, I could look my future in the face. The old boy, too, was so pleased at the idea of our association in this foolery, that he immediately plucked up spirit. Thus it befell that those who had met at the depot like a pair of mutes, sat down to table with holiday faces.

And now I have to introduce a new character that never said a word nor wagged a finger, and yet shaped my whole subsequent career. You have crossed the States, so that in all likelihood you have seen the head of it, parcel-gilt and curiously fluted, rising among trees from a wide plain; for this new character was no other than the State capitol of Muskegon, then first projected. My father had embraced the idea with a mixture of patriotism and commercial greed, both perfectly genuine. He was of all the committees, he had subscribed a great deal of money, and he was making arrangements to have a finger in most of the contracts. Competitive plans had been sent in; at the time of my return from college my father was deep in their consideration; and as the idea entirely occupied his mind, the first evening did not pass away before he had called me into council. Here was a subject at last into which I could throw myself with pleasurable zeal. Architecture was new to me, indeed; but it was at least an art; and for all the arts I had a taste naturally classical, and that capacity to take delighted pains which some famous idiot has sup-

posed to be synonymous with genius. I threw myself headlong into my father's work, acquainted myself with all the plans, their merits and defects, read besides in special books, made myself a master of the theory of strains, studied the current prices of materials, and (in one word) 'devilled' the whole business so thoroughly, that when the plans came up for consideration, Big Head Dodd was supposed to have earned fresh laurels. His arguments carried the day, his choice was approved by the committee, and I had the anonymous satisfaction to know that arguments and choice were wholly mine. In the re-casting of the plan which followed, my part was even larger; for I designed and cast with my own hand a hot-air grating for the offices, which had the luck or merit to be accepted. The energy and aptitude which I displayed throughout delighted and surprised my father, and I believe, although I say it, whose tongue should be tied, that they alone prevented Muskegon capitol from being the eyesore of my native State.

Altogether, I was in a cheery frame of mind when I returned to the commercial college; and my earlier operations were crowned with a full measure of success. My father wrote and wired to me continually. 'You are to exercise your own judgment, Loudon,' he would say. 'All that I do is to give you the figures; but whatever operation you take up must be upon your own responsibility, and whatever you earn will be entirely due to your own dash and forethought.' For all that, it was always clear

what he intended me to do, and I was always careful to do it. Inside of a month I was at the head of seventeen or eighteen thousand dollars, college paper. And here I fell a victim to one of the vices of the system. The paper (I have already explained) had a real value of one per cent.; and cost, and could be sold for, currency. Unsuccessful speculators were thus always selling clothes, books, banjos, and sleeve-links, in order to pay their differences; the successful, on the other hand, were often tempted to realise, and enjoy some return upon their profits. Now I wanted thirty dollars' worth of artist truck, for I was always sketching in the woods; my allowance was for the time exhausted; I had begun to regard the exchange (with my father's help) as a place where money was to be got for stooping; and in an evil hour I realised three thousand dollars of the college paper and bought my easel.

It was a Wednesday morning when the things arrived, and set me in the seventh heaven of satisfaction. My father (for I can scarcely say myself) was trying at this time a 'straddle' in wheat between Chicago and New York; the operation so called is, as you know, one of the most tempting and least safe upon the chess-board of finance. On the Thursday, luck began to turn against my father's calculations; and by the Friday evening I was posted on the boards as a defaulter for the second time. Here was a rude blow: my father would have taken it ill enough in any case; for however much a man may resent the incapacity of an only son, he will feel his

own more sensibly. But it chanced that, in our bitter cup of failure, there was one ingredient that might truly be called poisonous. He had been keeping the run of my position; he missed the three thousand dollars, paper; and in his view, I had stolen thirty dollars, currency. It was an extreme view perhaps; but in some senses, it was just: and my father, although (to my judgment) quite reckless of honesty in the essence of his operations, was the soul of honour as to their details. I had one grieved letter from him, dignified and tender; and during the rest of that wretched term, working as a clerk, selling my clothes and sketches to make futile speculations, my dream of Paris quite vanished. I was cheered by no word of kindness and helped by no hint of counsel from my father.

All the time he was no doubt thinking of little else but his son, and what to do with him. I believe he had been really appalled by what he regarded as my laxity of principle, and began to think it might be well to preserve me from temptation; the architect of the capitol had, besides, spoken obligingly of my design; and while he was thus hanging between two minds, Fortune suddenly stepped in, and Muskegon State capitol reversed my destiny.

'Loudon,' said my father, as he met me at the depot, with a smiling countenance, 'if you were to go to Paris, how long would it take you to become an experienced sculptor?'

'How do you mean, father?' I cried—'experienced?'

'A man that could be intrusted with the highest styles,' he answered; 'the nude, for instance; and the patriotic and emblematical styles.'

'It might take three years,' I replied.

'You think Paris necessary?' he asked. 'There are great advantages in our own country; and that man Prodgers appears to be a very clever sculptor, though I suppose he stands too high to go around giving lessons.'

'Paris is the only place,' I assured him.

'Well, I think myself it will sound better,' he admitted. 'A Young Man, a Native of this State, Son of a Leading Citizen, Studies Prosecuted under the Most Experienced Masters in Paris,' he added relishingly.

'But, my dear dad, what is it all about?' I interrupted. 'I never even dreamed of being a sculptor.'

'Well, here it is,' said he. 'I took up the statuary contract on our new capitol; I took it up at first as a deal; and then it occurred to me it would be better to keep it in the family. It meets your idea; there's considerable money in the thing; and it's patriotic. So, if you say the word, you shall go to Paris, and come back in three years to decorate the capitol of your native State. It's a big chance for you, Loudon; and I'll tell you what —every dollar you earn, I'll put another alongside of it. But the sooner you go, and the harder you work, the better; for if the first half-dozen statues aren't in a line with public taste in Muskegon, there will be trouble.'

CHAPTER II

ROUSSILLON WINE

My mother's family was Scottish, and it was judged fitting I should pay a visit, on my way Paris-ward, to my uncle Adam Loudon, a wealthy retired grocer of Edinburgh. He was very stiff and very ironical; he fed me well, lodged me sumptuously, and seemed to take it out of me all the time, cent. per cent., in secret entertainment which caused his spectacles to glitter and his mouth to twitch. The ground of this ill-suppressed mirth (as well as I could make out) was simply the fact that I was an American. 'Well,' he would say, drawing out the word to infinity, 'and I suppose now in your country things will be so-and-so.' And the whole group of my cousins would titter joyously. Repeated receptions of this sort must be at the root, I suppose, of what they call the Great American Jest; and I know I was myself goaded into saying that my friends went naked in the summer months, and that the Second Methodist Episcopal Church in Muskegon was decorated with scalps. I cannot say that these

flights had any great success; they seemed to awaken little more surprise than the fact that my father was a Republican, or that I had been taught in school to spell *colour* without the *u*. If I had told them (what was, after all, the truth) that my father had paid a considerable annual sum to have me brought up in a gambling-hell, the tittering and grinning of this dreadful family might perhaps have been excused.

I cannot deny but I was sometimes tempted to knock my uncle Adam down; and indeed I believe it must have come to a rupture at last, if they had not given a dinner-party at which I was the lion. On this occasion I learned (to my surprise and relief) that the incivility to which I had been subjected was a matter for the family circle, and might be regarded almost in the light of an endearment. To strangers I was presented with consideration; and the account given of 'my American brother-in-law, poor Janie's man, James K. Dodd, the well-known millionaire of Muskegon,' was calculated to enlarge the heart of a proud son.

An aged assistant of my grandfather's, a pleasant, humble creature with a taste for whisky, was at first deputed to be my guide about the city. With this harmless but hardly aristocratic companion I went to Arthur's Seat and the Calton Hill, heard the band play in Princes Street Gardens, inspected the regalia and the blood of Rizzio, and fell in love with the great castle on its cliff, the innumerable spires of churches, the stately buildings, the broad prospects,

and those narrow and crowded lanes of the old town where my ancestors had lived and died in the days before Columbus.

But there was another curiosity that interested me more deeply—my grandfather, Alexander Loudon. In his time the old gentleman had been a working mason, and had risen from the ranks—more, I think, by shrewdness than by merit. In his appearance, speech, and manners, he bore broad marks of his origin, which were gall and wormwood to my uncle Adam. His nails, in spite of anxious supervision, were often in conspicuous mourning; his clothes hung about him in bags and wrinkles, like a ploughman's Sunday coat; his accent was rude, broad, and dragging. Take him at his best, and even when he could be induced to hold his tongue, his mere presence in a corner of the drawing-room, with his open-air wrinkles, his scanty hair, his battered hands, and the cheerful craftiness of his expression, advertised the whole gang of us for a self-made family. My aunt might mince and my cousins bridle, but there was no getting over the solid, physical fact of the stonemason in the chimney-corner.

That is one advantage of being an American. It never occurred to me to be ashamed of my grandfather, and the old gentleman was quick to mark the difference. He held my mother in tender memory, perhaps because he was in the habit of daily contrasting her with Uncle Adam, whom he detested to the point of frenzy; and he set down to inheritance from his favourite my own becoming treatment of

himself. On our walks abroad, which soon became daily, he would sometimes (after duly warning me to keep the matter dark from 'Aadam') skulk into some old familiar pot-house, and there (if he had the luck to encounter any of his veteran cronies) he would present me to the company with manifest pride, casting at the same time a covert slur on the rest of his descendants. 'This is my Jeannie's yin,' he would say. 'He 's a fine fallow, him.' The purpose of our excursions was not to seek antiquities or to enjoy famous prospects, but to visit one after another a series of doleful suburbs, for which it was the old gentleman's chief claim to renown that he had been the sole contractor, and too often the architect besides. I have rarely seen a more shocking exhibition: the brick seemed to be blushing in the walls, and the slates on the roof to have turned pale with shame; but I was careful not to communicate these impressions to the aged artificer at my side; and when he would direct my attention to some fresh monstrosity—perhaps with the comment, 'There 's an idee of mine's; it 's cheap and tasty, and had a graand run; the idee was soon stole, and there 's whole deestricts near Glesgie with the goathic addeetion and that plunth,' I would civilly make haste to admire and (what I found particularly delighted him) to inquire into the cost of each adornment. It will be conceived that Muskegon capitol was a frequent and a welcome ground of talk. I drew him all the plans from memory; and he, with the aid of a narrow volume full of figures and

tables, which answered (I believe) to the name of Molesworth, and was his constant pocket-companion, would draw up rough estimates and make imaginary offers on the various contracts. Our Muskegon builders he pronounced a pack of cormorants; and the congenial subject, together with my knowledge of architectural terms, the theory of strains, and the prices of materials in the States, formed a strong bond of union between what might have been otherwise an ill-assorted pair, and led my grandfather to pronounce me, with emphasis, 'a real intalligent kind of a chield.' Thus a second time, as you will presently see, the capitol of my native State had influentially affected the current of my life.

I left Edinburgh, however, with not the least idea that I had done a stroke of excellent business for myself, and singly delighted to escape out of a somewhat dreary house and plunge instead into the rainbow city of Paris. Every man has his own romance; mine clustered exclusively about the practice of the arts, the life of Latin Quarter students, and the world of Paris as depicted by that grimy wizard, the author of the *Comédie Humaine.* I was not disappointed—I could not have been; for I did not see the facts, I brought them with me ready-made. *Z.* Marcas lived next door to me in my ungainly, ill-smelling hotel of the Rue Racine; I dined at my villainous restaurant with Lousteau and with Rastignac: if a curricle nearly ran me down at a street-crossing, Maxime de Trailles would be the driver. I dined, I say, at a poor restaurant and

lived in a poor hotel; and this was not from need, but sentiment. My father gave me a profuse allowance, and I might have lived (had I chosen) in the Quartier de l'Étoile and driven to my studies daily. Had I done so, the glamour must have fled: I should still have been but Loudon Dodd; whereas now I was a Latin Quarter student, Murger's successor, living in flesh and blood the life of one of those romances I had loved to read, to re-read, and to dream over, among the woods of Muskegon.

At this time we were all a little Murger-mad in the Latin Quarter. The play of the *Vie de Bohème* (a dreary, snivelling piece) had been produced at the Odéon, had run an unconscionable time—for Paris—and revived the freshness of the legend. The same business, you may say, or there and thereabout, was being privately enacted in consequence in every garret of the neighbourhood, and a good third of the students were consciously impersonating Rodolphe or Schaunard, to their own incommunicable satisfaction. Some of us went far, and some farther. I always looked with awful envy (for instance) on a certain countryman of my own who had a studio in the Rue Monsieur le Prince, wore boots, and long hair in a net, and could be seen tramping off, in this guise, to the worst eating-house of the quarter, followed by a Corsican model, his mistress, in the conspicuous costume of her race and calling. It takes some greatness of soul to carry even folly to such heights as these; and for my own part, I had to content myself by pretending very arduously to be

poor, by wearing a smoking-cap on the streets, and by pursuing, through a series of misadventures, that extinct mammal the grisette. The most grievous part was the eating and the drinking. I was born with a dainty tooth and a palate for wine; and only a genuine devotion to romance could have supported me under the cat-civets that I had to swallow, and the red ink of Bercy I must wash them down withal. Every now and again, after a hard day at the studio, where I was steadily and far from unsuccessfully industrious, a wave of distaste would overbear me; I would slink away from my haunts and companions, indemnify myself for weeks of self-denial with fine wines and dainty dishes; seated perhaps on a terrace, perhaps in an arbour in a garden, with a volume of one of my favourite authors propped open in front of me, and now consulted a while, and now forgotten: so remain, relishing my situation, till night fell and the lights of the city kindled; and thence stroll homeward by the river-side, under the moon or stars, in a heaven of poetry and digestion.

One such indulgence led me in the course of my second year into an adventure which I must relate: indeed, it is the very point I have been aiming for, since that was what brought me in acquaintance with Jim Pinkerton. I sat down alone to dinner one October day when the rusty leaves were falling and scuttling on the boulevard, and the minds of impressionable men inclined in about an equal degree towards sadness and conviviality. The restaurant was no great place, but boasted a considerable cellar

and a long printed list of vintages. This I was perusing with the double zest of a man who is fond of wine and a lover of beautiful names, when my eye fell (near the end of the card) on that not very famous or familiar brand, Roussillon. I remembered it was a wine I had never tasted, ordered a bottle, found it excellent, and when I had discussed the contents, called (according to my habit) for a final pint. It appears they did not keep Roussillon in half-bottles. 'All right,' said I, 'another bottle.' The tables at this eating-house are close together; and the next thing I can remember, I was in somewhat loud conversation with my nearest neighbours. From these I must have gradually extended my attentions; for I have a clear recollection of gazing about a room in which every chair was half turned round and every face turned smilingly to mine. I can even remember what I was saying at the moment; but after twenty years the embers of shame are still alive, and I prefer to give your imagination the cue by simply mentioning that my muse was the patriotic. It had been my design to adjourn for coffee in the company of some of these new friends; but I was no sooner on the sidewalk than I found myself unaccountably alone. The circumstance scarce surprised me at the time, much less now; but I was somewhat chagrined a little after to find I had walked into a kiosque. I began to wonder if I were any the worse for my last bottle, and decided to steady myself with coffee and brandy. In the Café de la Source, where I went for this

restorative, the fountain was playing, and (what greatly surprised me) the mill and the various mechanical figures on the rockery appeared to have been freshly repaired, and performed the most enchanting antics. The café was extraordinarily hot and bright, with every detail of a conspicuous clearness—from the faces of the guests, to the type of the newspapers on the tables—and the whole apartment swang to and fro like a hammock, with an exhilarating motion. For some while I was so extremely pleased with these particulars that I thought I could never be weary of beholding them: then dropped of a sudden into a causeless sadness; and then, with the same swiftness and spontaneity, arrived at the conclusion that I was drunk and had better get to bed.

It was but a step or two to my hotel, where I got my lighted candle from the porter, and mounted the four flights to my own room. Although I could not deny that I was drunk, I was at the same time lucidly rational and practical. I had but one pre-occupation —to be up in time on the morrow for my work; and when I observed the clock on my chimney-piece to have stopped, I decided to go down-stairs again and give directions to the porter. Leaving the candle burning and my door open, to be a guide to me on my return, I set forth accordingly. The house was quite dark; but as there were only the three doors on each landing, it was impossible to wander, and I had nothing to do but descend the stairs until I saw the glimmer of the porter's night-

light. I counted four flights: no porter. It was possible, of course, that I had reckoned incorrectly; so I went down another and another, and another, still counting as I went, until I had reached the preposterous figure of nine flights. It was now quite clear that I had somehow passed the porter's lodge without remarking it; indeed, I was, at the lowest figure, five pairs of stairs below the street, and plunged in the very bowels of the earth. That my hotel should thus be founded upon catacombs was a discovery of considerable interest; and if I had not been in a frame of mind entirely business-like, I might have continued to explore all night this subterranean empire. But I was bound I must be up betimes on the next morning, and for that end it was imperative that I should find the porter. I faced about accordingly, and counting with painful care, remounted towards the level of the street. Five, six, and seven flights I climbed, and still there was no porter. I began to be weary of the job, and reflecting that I was now close to my own room, decided I should go to bed. Eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen flights I mounted; and my open door seemed to be as wholly lost to me as the porter and his floating dip. I remembered that the house stood but six stories at its highest point, from which it appeared (on the most moderate computation) I was now three stories higher than the roof. My original sense of amusement was succeeded by a not unnatural irritation. 'My room has just *got* to be here,' said I, and I stepped towards the door with

outspread arms. There was no door and no wall; in place of either there yawned before me a dark corridor, in which I continued to advance for some time without encountering the smallest opposition. And this in a house whose extreme area scantily contained three small rooms, a narrow landing, and the stair! The thing was manifestly nonsense; and you will scarcely be surprised to learn that I now began to lose my temper. At this juncture I perceived a filtering of light along the floor, stretched forth my hand, which encountered the knob of a door-handle, and without further ceremony entered a room. A young lady was within: she was going to bed, and her toilet was far advanced—or the other way about, if you prefer.

'I hope you will pardon this intrusion,' said I; 'but my room is No. 12, and something has gone wrong with this blamed house.'

She looked at me a moment; and then, 'If you will step outside for a moment, I will take you there,' says she.

Thus, with perfect composure on both sides, the matter was arranged. I waited a while outside her door. Presently she rejoined me, in a dressing-gown, took my hand, led me up another flight, which made the fourth above the level of the roof, and shut me into my own room, where (being quite weary after these contra-ordinary explorations) I turned in and slumbered like a child.

I tell you the thing calmly, as it appeared to me to pass; but the next day, when I awoke and put

memory in the witness-box, I could not conceal from myself that the tale presented a good many improbable features. I had no mind for the studio, after all, and went instead to the Luxembourg gardens, there, among the sparrows and the statues and the falling leaves, to cool and clear my head. It is a garden I have always loved. You sit there in a public place of history and fiction. Barras and Fouché have looked from these windows. Lousteau and De Banville (one as real as the other) have rhymed upon these benches. The city tramples by without the railings to a lively measure; and within and about you, trees rustle, children and sparrows utter their small cries, and the statues look on for ever. Here, then, in a seat opposite the gallery entrance, I set to work on the events of the last night, to disengage (if it were possible) truth from fiction.

The house, by daylight, had proved to be six stories high, the same as ever. I could find, with all my architectural experience, no room in its altitude for those interminable stairways, no width between its walls for that long corridor, where I had tramped at night. And there was yet a greater difficulty. I had read somewhere an aphorism that everything may be false to itself save human nature. A house might elongate or enlarge itself—or seem to do so to a gentleman who had been dining. The ocean might dry up, the rocks melt in the sun, the stars fall from heaven like autumn apples; and there was nothing in these incidents to boggle the philosopher. But the

case of the young lady stood upon a different foundation. Girls were not good enough, or not good that way, or else they were too good. I was ready to accept any of these views: all pointed to the same conclusion, which I was thus already on the point of reaching, when a fresh argument occurred, and instantly confirmed it. I could remember the exact words we had each said; and I had spoken, and she had replied, in English. Plainly, then, the whole affair was an illusion: catacombs, and stairs, and charitable lady, all were equally the stuff of dreams.

I had just come to this determination, when there blew a flaw of wind through the autumnal gardens; the dead leaves showered down, and a flight of sparrows, thick as a snowfall, wheeled above my head with sudden pipings. This agreeable bustle was the affair of a moment, but it startled me from the abstraction into which I had fallen like a summons. I sat briskly up, and as I did so my eyes rested on the figure of a lady in a brown jacket and carrying a paint-box. By her side walked a fellow some years older than myself, with an easel under his arm; and alike by their course and cargo I might judge they were bound for the gallery, where the lady was, doubtless, engaged upon some copying. You can imagine my surprise when I recognised in her the heroine of my adventure. To put the matter beyond question our eyes met, and she, seeing herself remembered, and recalling the trim in which I had last beheld her, looked swiftly on the ground with just a shadow of confusion.

I could not tell you to-day if she were plain or pretty; but she had behaved with so much good sense, and I had cut so poor a figure in her presence, that I became instantly fired with the desire to display myself in a more favourable light. The young man, besides, was possibly her brother; brothers are apt to be hasty, theirs being a part in which it is possible, at a comparatively early age, to assume the dignity of manhood; and it occurred to me it might be wise to forestall all possible complications by an apology.

On this reasoning I drew near to the gallery door, and had hardly got in position before the young man came out. Thus it was that I came face to face with my third destiny, for my career has been entirely shaped by these three elements—my father, the capitol of Muskegon, and my friend Jim Pinkerton. As for the young lady, with whom my mind was at the moment chiefly occupied, I was never to hear more of her from that day forward—an excellent example of the Blind Man's Buff that we call life.

CHAPTER III

TO INTRODUCE MR. PINKERTON

THE stranger, I have said, was some years older than myself: a man of a good stature, a very lively face, cordial, agitated manners, and a grey eye as active as a fowl's.

'May I have a word with you?' said I.

'My dear sir,' he replied, 'I don't know what it can be about, but you may have a hundred if you like.'

'You have just left the side of a young lady,' I continued, 'towards whom I was led (very unintentionally) into the appearance of an offence. To speak to herself would be only to renew her embarrassment, and I seize the occasion of making my apology, and declaring my respect, to one of my own sex who is her friend, and perhaps,' I added, with a bow, 'her natural protector.'

'You are a countryman of mine; I know it!' he cried: 'I am sure of it by your delicacy to a lady. You do her no more than justice. I was introduced to her the other night at tea, in the apartment of

some people, friends of mine; and meeting her again this morning, I could not do less than carry her easel for her. 'My dear sir, what is your name?'

I was disappointed to find he had so little bond with my young lady; and but that it was I who had sought the acquaintance, might have been tempted to retreat. At the same time something in the stranger's eye engaged me.

'My name,' said I, 'is Loudon Dodd; I am a student of sculpture here from Muskegon.'

'Of sculpture?' he cried, as though that would have been his last conjecture. 'Mine is James Pinkerton; I am delighted to have the pleasure of your acquaintance.'

'Pinkerton!' it was now my turn to exclaim. 'Are you Broken-Stool Pinkerton?'

He admitted his identity with a laugh of boyish delight; and indeed any young man in the quarter might have been proud to own a sobriquet thus gallantly acquired.

In order to explain the name, I must here digress into a chapter of the history of manners in the nineteenth century, very well worth commemoration for its own sake. In some of the studios at that date, the hazing of new pupils was both barbarous and obscene. Two incidents, following one on the heels of the other, tended to produce an advance in civilisation by the means (as so commonly happens) of a passing appeal to savage standards. The first was the arrival of a little gentleman from Armenia. He had a fez upon his head and (what nobody

counted on) a dagger in his pocket. The hazing was set about in the customary style, and, perhaps in virtue of the victim's head-gear, even more boisterously than usual. He bore it at first with an inviting patience; but upon one of the students proceeding to an unpardonable freedom, plucked out his knife and suddenly plunged it in the belly of the jester. This gentleman, I am pleased to say, passed months upon a bed of sickness before he was in a position to resume his studies. The second incident was that which had earned Pinkerton his reputation. In a crowded studio, while some very filthy brutalities were being practised on a trembling *débutant*, a tall pale fellow sprang from his stool and (without the smallest preface or explanation) sang out, 'All English and Americans to clear the shop!' Our race is brutal, but not filthy; and the summons was nobly responded to. Every Anglo-Saxon student seized his stool; in a moment the studio was full of bloody coxcombs, the French fleeing in disorder for the door, the victim liberated and amazed. In this feat of arms both English-speaking nations covered themselves with glory; but I am proud to claim the author of the whole for an American, and a patriotic American at that, being the same gentleman who had subsequently to be held down in the bottom of a box during a performance of *L'Oncle Sam*, sobbing at intervals, 'My country! O my country!' while yet another (my new acquaintance Pinkerton) was supposed to have made the most conspicuous figure in the actual battle. At one blow he had broken

his own stool, and sent the largest of his opponents back foremost through what we used to call a 'conscientious nude.' It appears that, in the continuation of his flight, this fallen warrior issued on the boulevard still framed in the burst canvas.

It will be understood how much talk the incident aroused in the students' quarter, and that I was highly gratified to make the acquaintance of my famous countryman. It chanced I was to see more of the Quixotic side of his character before the morning was done; for, as we continued to stroll together, I found myself near the studio of a young Frenchman whose work I had promised to examine, and in the fashion of the quarter carried up Pinkerton along with me. Some of my comrades of this date were pretty obnoxious fellows. I could almost always admire and respect the grown-up practitioners of art in Paris; but many of those who were still in a state of pupilage were sorry specimens—so much so that I used often to wonder where the painters came from, and where the brutes of students went to. A similar mystery hangs over the intermediate stages of the medical profession, and must have perplexed the least observant. The ruffian, at least, whom I now carried Pinkerton to visit, was one of the most crapulous in the quarter. He turned out for our delectation a huge 'crust' (as we used to call it) of St. Stephen, wallowing in red upon his belly in an exhausted receiver, and a crowd of Hebrews in blue, green, and yellow, pelting him —apparently with buns; and while we gazed upon

this contrivance, regaled us with a piece of his own recent biography, of which his mind was still very full, and which, he seemed to fancy, represented him in an heroic posture. I was one of those cosmopolitan Americans who accept the world (whether at home or abroad) as they find it, and whose favourite part is that of the spectator; yet even I was listening with ill-suppressed disgust, when I was aware of a violent plucking at my sleeve.

'Is he saying he kicked her down-stairs?' asked Pinkerton, white as St. Stephen.

'Yes,' said I: 'his discarded mistress; and then he pelted her with stones. I suppose that 's what gave him the idea for his picture. He has just been alleging the pathetic excuse that she was old enough to be his mother.'

Something like a sob broke from Pinkerton. 'Tell him,' he gasped—'I can't speak this language, though I understand a little; I never had any proper education—tell him I 'm going to punch his head.'

'For God's sake do nothing of the sort!' I cried; 'they don't understand that sort of thing here'; and I tried to bundle him out.

'Tell him first what we think of him,' he objected. 'Let me tell him what he looks in the eyes of a pure-minded American.'

'Leave that to me,' said I, thrusting Pinkerton clear through the door.

'*Qu'est-ce qu'il a?*'[1] inquired the student.

[1] 'What 's the matter with him?'

'*Monsieur se sent mal au cœur d'avoir trop regardé votre croûte,*'[1] said I, and made my escape, scarce with dignity, at Pinkerton's heels.

'What did you say to him?' he asked.

'The only thing that he could feel,' was my reply.

After this scene, the freedom with which I had ejected my new acquaintance, and the precipitation with which I had followed him, the least I could do was to propose luncheon. I have forgot the name of the place to which I led him, nothing loath; it was on the far side of the Luxembourg at least, with a garden behind, where we were speedily set face to face at table, and began to dig into each other's history and character, like terriers after rabbits, according to the approved fashion of youth.

Pinkerton's parents were from the Old Country; there, too, I incidentally gathered, he had himself been born, though it was a circumstance he seemed prone to forget. Whether he had run away, or his father had turned him out, I never fathomed; but about the age of twelve he was thrown upon his own resources. A travelling tin-type photographer picked him up, like a haw out of a hedgerow, on a wayside in New Jersey; took a fancy to the urchin; carried him on with him in his wandering life; taught him all he knew himself—to take tin-types (as well as I can make out) and doubt the Scriptures; and died at last in Ohio at the corner of a road. 'He was a grand specimen,' cried Pinkerton;

[1] 'The gentleman is sick at his stomach from having looked too long at your daub.'

'I wish you could have seen him, Mr. Dodd. He had an appearance of magnanimity that used to remind me of the patriarchs.' On the death of this random protector, the boy inherited the plant and continued the business. 'It was a life I could have chosen, Mr. Dodd!' he cried. 'I have been in all the finest scenes of that magnificent continent that we were born to be the heirs of. I wish you could see my collection of tin-types; I wish I had them here. They were taken for my own pleasure, and to be a memento: and they show Nature in her grandest as well as her gentlest moments.' As he tramped the Western States and Territories, taking tin-types, the boy was continually getting hold of books, good, bad, and indifferent, popular and abstruse, from the novels of Sylvanus Cobb to Euclid's Elements, both of which I found (to my almost equal wonder) he had managed to peruse: he was taking stock by the way, of the people, the products, and the country, with an eye unusually observant and a memory unusually retentive; and he was collecting for himself a body of magnanimous and semi-intellectual nonsense, which he supposed to be the natural thoughts and to contain the whole duty of the born American. To be pure-minded, to be patriotic, to get culture and money with both hands and with the same irrational fervour—these appeared to be the chief articles of his creed. In later days (not of course upon this first occasion) I would sometimes ask him why; and he had his answer pat. 'To build up the type!' he would cry.

'We're all committed to that; we're all under bond to fulfil the American Type! Loudon, the hope of the world is there. If we fail, like these old feudal monarchies, what is left?'

The trade of a tin-typer proved too narrow for the lad's ambition; it was insusceptible of expansion, he explained; it was not truly modern; and by a sudden conversion of front he became a railroad-scalper. The principles of this trade I never clearly understood; but its essence appears to be to cheat the railroads out of their due fare. 'I threw my whole soul into it; I grudged myself food and sleep while I was at it; the most practised hands admitted I had caught on to the idea in a month and revolutionised the practice inside of a year,' he said. 'And there's interest in it, too. It's amusing to pick out some one going by, make up your mind about his character and tastes, dash out of the office, and hit him flying with an offer of the very place he wants to go to. I don't think there was a scalper on the continent made fewer blunders. But I took it only as a stage. I was saving every dollar; I was looking ahead. I knew what I wanted—wealth, education, a refined home, and a conscientious cultured lady for a wife; for, Mr. Dodd'—this with a formidable outcry—'every man is bound to marry above him: if the woman's not the man's superior, I brand it as mere sensuality. There was my idea, at least. That was what I was saving for; and enough, too! But it isn't every man, I know that—it's far from every man—could do what I did: close

up the livest agency in Saint Jo, where he was coining dollars by the pot, set out alone, without a friend, or a word of French, and settle down here to spend his capital learning art.'

'Was it an old taste?' I asked him, 'or a sudden fancy?'

'Neither, Mr. Dodd,' he admitted. 'Of course I had learned in my tin-typing excursions to glory and exult in the works of God. But it wasn't that. I just said to myself, "What is most wanted in my age and country? More culture and more art," I said; and I chose the best place, saved my money, and came here to get them.'

The whole attitude of this young man warmed and shamed me. He had more fire in his little toe than I had in my whole carcase; he was stuffed to bursting with the manly virtues; thrift and courage glowed in him; and even if his artistic vocation seemed (to one of my exclusive tenets) not quite clear, who could predict what might be accomplished by a creature so full-blooded and so inspired with animal and intellectual energy? So, when he proposed that I should come and see his work (one of the regular stages of a Latin Quarter friendship), I followed him with interest and hope.

He lodged parsimoniously at the top of a tall house near the Observatory, in a bare room principally furnished with his own trunks, and papered with his own despicable studies. No man has less taste for disagreeable duties than myself; perhaps there is only one subject on which I cannot flatter

a man without a blush; but upon that, upon all that touches art, my sincerity is Roman. Once and twice I made the circuit of his walls in silence, spying in every corner for some spark of merit; he meanwhile following close at my heels, reading the verdict in my face with furtive glances, presenting some fresh study for my inspection with undisguised anxiety, and (after it had been silently weighed in the balances and found wanting) whisking it away with an open gesture of despair. By the time the second round was completed, we were both extremely depressed.

'Oh!' he groaned, breaking the long silence, 'it's quite unnecessary you should speak!'

'Do you want me to be frank with you? I think you are wasting time,' said I.

'You don't see any promise?' he inquired, beguiled by some return of hope, and turning upon me the embarrassing brightness of his eye. 'Not in this still-life here of the melon? One fellow thought it good.'

It was the least I could do to give the melon a more particular examination; which, when I had done, I could but shake my head. 'I am truly sorry, Pinkerton,' said I, 'but I can't advise you to persevere.'

He seemed to recover his fortitude at the moment, rebounding from disappointment like a man of india-rubber. 'Well,' said he stoutly, 'I don't know that I 'm surprised. But I 'll go on with the course; and throw my whole soul into it too. You mustn't

think the time is lost. It's all culture; it will help me to extend my relations when I get back home; it may fit me for a position on one of the illustrateds; and then I can always turn dealer,' he said, uttering the monstrous proposition, which was enough to shake the Latin Quarter to the dust, with entire simplicity. 'It's all experience, besides,' he continued; 'and it seems to me there's a tendency to underrate experience, both as net profit and investment. Never mind. That's done with. But it took courage for you to say what you did, and I'll never forget it. Here's my hand, Mr. Dodd. I'm not your equal in culture or talent.'

'You know nothing about that,' I interrupted. 'I have seen your work, but you haven't seen mine.'

'No more I have,' he cried; 'and let's go see it at once! But I know you are away up; I can feel it here.'

To say truth, I was almost ashamed to introduce him to my studio—my work, whether absolutely good or bad, being so vastly superior to his. But his spirits were now quite restored; and he amazed me, on the way, with his light-hearted talk and new projects. So that I began at last to understand how matters lay: that this was not an artist who had been deprived of the practice of his single art; but only a business man of very extended interests, informed (perhaps something of the most suddenly) that one investment out of twenty had gone wrong.

As a matter of fact, besides (although I never

suspected it), he was already seeking consolation with another of the muses, and pleasing himself with the notion that he would repay me for my sincerity, cement our friendship, and (at one and the same blow) restore my estimation of his talents. Several times already, when I had been speaking of myself, he had pulled out a writing-pad and scribbled a brief note; and now, when we entered the studio, I saw it in his hand again, and the pencil go to his mouth, as he cast a comprehensive glance round the uncomfortable building.

'Are you going to make a sketch of it?' I could not help asking, as I unveiled the Genius of Muskegon.

'Ah, that 's my secret,' said he. 'Never you mind. A mouse can help a lion.'

He walked round my statue, and had the design explained to him. I had represented Muskegon as a young, almost a stripling mother, with something of an Indian type; the babe upon her knees was winged, to indicate our soaring future; and her seat was a medley of sculptured fragments, Greek, Roman, and Gothic, to remind us of the older worlds from which we trace our generation.

'Now, does this satisfy you, Mr. Dodd?' he inquired, as soon as I had explained to him the main features of the design.

'Well,' I said, 'the fellows seem to think it 's not a bad *bonne femme* for a beginner. I don't think it 's entirely bad myself. Here is the best point; it builds up best from here. No, it seems to me it

has a kind of merit,' I admitted; 'but I mean to do better.'

'Ah, that 's the word!' cried Pinkerton. 'There 's the word I love!' and he scribbled in his pad.

'What in creation ails you?' I inquired. 'It 's the most commonplace expression in the English language.'

'Better and better!' chuckled Pinkerton. 'The unconsciousness of genius. Lord, but this is coming in beautiful!' and he scribbled again.

'If you 're going to be fulsome,' said I, 'I 'll close the place of entertainment'; and I threatened to replace the veil upon the Genius.

'No, no,' said he; 'don't be in a hurry. Give me a point or two. Show me what 's particularly good.'

'I would rather you found that out for yourself,' said I.

'The trouble is,' said he, 'that I 've never turned my attention to sculpture—beyond, of course, admiring it, as everybody must who has a soul. So do just be a good fellow, and explain to me what you like in it, and what you tried for, and where the merit comes in. It 'll be all education for me.'

'Well, in sculpture, you see, the first thing you have to consider is the masses. It 's, after all, a kind of architecture,' I began, and delivered a lecture on that branch of art, with illustrations from my own masterpiece there present—all of which, if you don't mind, or whether you mind or not, I mean to conscientiously omit. Pinkerton listened with a fiery interest, questioned me with a certain unculti-

vated shrewdness, and continued to scratch down notes, and tear fresh sheets from his pad. I found it inspiring to have my words thus taken down like a professor's lecture; and having had no previous experience of the press, I was unaware that they were all being taken down wrong. For the same reason (incredible as it must appear in an American) I never entertained the least suspicion that they were destined to be dished up with a sauce of penny-a-lining gossip; and myself, my person, and my works of art, butchered to make a holiday for the readers of a Sunday paper. Night had fallen over the Genius of Muskegon before the issue of my theoretic eloquence was stayed, nor did I separate from my new friend without an appointment for the morrow.

I was, indeed, greatly taken with this first view of my countryman, and continued, on further acquaintance, to be interested, amused, and attracted by him in about equal proportions. I must not say he had a fault, not only because my mouth is sealed by gratitude, but because those he had sprang merely from his education, and you could see he had cultivated and improved them like virtues. For all that, I can never deny he was a troublous friend to me, and the trouble began early.

It may have been a fortnight later that I divined the secret of the writing-pad. My wretch (it leaked out) wrote letters for a paper in the West, and had filled a part of one of them with descriptions of myself. I pointed out to him that he had no right to do so without asking my permission.

'Why, this is just what I hoped!' he exclaimed. 'I thought you didn't seem to catch on; only it seemed too good to be true.'

'But, my good fellow, you were bound to warn me,' I objected.

'I know it's generally considered etiquette,' he admitted; 'but between friends, and when it was only with a view of serving you, I thought it wouldn't matter. I wanted it (if possible) to come on you as a surprise; I wanted you just to waken, like Lord Byron, and find the papers full of you. You must admit it was a natural thought. And no man likes to boast of a favour beforehand.'

'But, heavens and earth! how do you know I think it a favour?' I cried.

He became immediately plunged in despair. 'You think it a liberty,' said he; 'I see that. I would rather have cut off my hand. I would stop it now, only it's too late; it's published by now. And I wrote it with so much pride and pleasure!'

I could think of nothing but how to console him. 'O, I daresay it's all right,' said I. 'I know you meant it kindly, and you would be sure to do it in good taste.'

'That you may swear to,' he cried. 'It's a pure, bright, A number 1 paper; the St. Jo *Sunday Herald*. The idea of the series was quite my own; I interviewed the editor, put it to him straight; the freshness of the idea took him, and I walked out of that office with the contract in my pocket, and did my first Paris letter that evening in Saint Jo. The

editor did no more than glance his eye down the headlines. "You 're the man for us," said he.'

I was certainly far from reassured by this sketch of the class of literature in which I was to make my first appearance; but I said no more, and possessed my soul in patience, until the day came when I received a copy of a newspaper marked in the corner, 'Compliments of J. P.' I opened it with sensible shrinkings; and there, wedged between an account of a prize-fight and a skittish article upon chiropody —think of chiropody treated with a leer!—I came upon a column and a half in which myself and my poor statue were embalmed. Like the editor with the first of the series, I did but glance my eye down the head-lines, and was more than satisfied.

ANOTHER OF PINKERTON'S SPICY CHATS.

ART PRACTITIONERS IN PARIS.

MUSKEGON'S COLUMNED CAPITOL.

SON OF MILLIONAIRE DODD,

PATRIOT AND ARTIST.

'HE MEANS TO DO BETTER.'

In the body of the text, besides, my eye caught, as it passed, some deadly expressions: 'Figure somewhat fleshy,' 'bright, intellectual smile,' 'the unconsciousness of genius,' '"Now, Mr. Dodd," resumed the reporter, "what would be your idea of a distinctively American quality in sculpture?"' It was true the question had been asked; it was true,

alas! that I had answered: and now here was my reply, or some strange hash of it, gibbeted in the cold publicity of type. I thanked God that my French fellow-students were ignorant of English; but when I thought of the British—of Myner (for instance) or the Stennises—I think I could have fallen on Pinkerton and beat him.

To divert my thoughts (if it were possible) from this calamity, I turned to a letter from my father which had arrived by the same post. The envelope contained a strip of newspaper cutting; and my eye caught again, 'Son of Millionaire Dodd—Figure somewhat fleshy,' and the rest of the degrading nonsense. What would my father think of it? I wondered, and opened his manuscript. 'My dearest boy,' it began, 'I send you a cutting which has pleased me very much, from a St. Joseph paper of high standing. At last you seem to be coming fairly to the front, and I cannot but reflect with delight and gratitude how very few youths of your age occupy nearly two columns of press-matter all to themselves. I only wish your dear mother had been here to read it over my shoulder; but we will hope she shares my grateful emotion in a better place. Of course I have sent a copy to your grandfather and uncle in Edinburgh; so you can keep the one I enclose. This Jim Pinkerton seems a valuable acquaintance; he has certainly great talent; and it is a good general rule to keep in with pressmen.'

I hope it will be set down to the right side of my account, but I had no sooner read these words, so

touchingly silly, than my anger against Pinkerton was swallowed up in gratitude. Of all the circumstances of my career—my birth, perhaps, excepted—not one had given my poor father so profound a pleasure as this article in the *Sunday Herald*. What a fool, then, was I to be lamenting! when I had at last, and for once, and at the cost of only a few blushes, paid back a fraction of my debt of gratitude. So that, when I next met Pinkerton, I took things very lightly; my father was pleased, and thought the letter very clever, I told him; for my own part, I had no taste for publicity; thought the public had no concern with the artist, only with his art; and though I owned he had handled it with great consideration, I should take it as a favour if he never did it again.

'There it is,' he said despondingly. 'I've hurt you. You can't deceive me, Loudon. It's the want of tact, and it's incurable.' He sat down, and leaned his head upon his hand. 'I had no advantages when I was young, you see,' he added.

'Not in the least, my dear fellow,' said I. 'Only the next time you wish to do me a service, just speak about my work; leave my wretched person out, and my still more wretched conversation; and above all,' I added, with an irrepressible shudder, 'don't tell them how I said it! There's that phrase, now: "With a proud, glad smile." Who cares whether I smiled or not?'

'Oh, there now, Loudon, you're entirely wrong,' he broke in. 'That's what the public likes; that's

the merit of the thing, the literary value. It's to call up the scene before them; it's to enable the humblest citizen to enjoy that afternoon the same as I did. Think what it would have been to me when I was tramping around with my tin-types to find a column and a half of real, cultured conversation—an artist, in his studio abroad, talking of his art,—and to know how he looked as he did it, and what the room was like, and what he had for breakfast; and to tell myself, eating tinned beans beside a creek, that if all went well, the same sort of thing would, sooner or later, happen to myself; why, Loudon, it would have been like a peep-hole into heaven!'

'Well, if it gives so much pleasure,' I admitted, 'the sufferers shouldn't complain. Only give the other fellows a turn.'

The end of the matter was to bring myself and the journalist in a more close relation. If I know anything at all of human nature—and the *if* is no mere figure of speech, but stands for honest doubt—no series of benefits conferred, or even dangers shared, would have so rapidly confirmed our friendship as this quarrel avoided, this fundamental difference of taste and training accepted and condoned.

CHAPTER IV

IN WHICH I EXPERIENCE EXTREMES OF FORTUNE

WHETHER it came from my training and repeated bankruptcy at the Commercial College, or by direct inheritance from old Loudon, the Edinburgh mason, there can be no doubt about the fact that I was thrifty. Looking myself impartially over, I believe that is my only manly virtue. During my first two years in Paris I not only made it a point to keep well inside of my allowance, but accumulated considerable savings in the bank. You will say, with my masquerade of living as a penniless student, it must have been easy to do so: I should have had no difficulty, however, in doing the reverse. Indeed, it is wonderful I did not; and early in the third year, or soon after I had known Pinkerton, a singular incident proved it to have been equally wise. Quarter-day came, and brought no allowance. A letter of remonstrance was despatched, and, for the first time in my experience, remained unanswered. A cablegram was more effectual; for it brought me at least a promise of attention. 'Will write at once,'

my father telegraphed; but I waited long for his letter. I was puzzled, angry, and alarmed; but, thanks to my previous thrift, I cannot say that I was ever practically embarrassed. The embarrassment, the distress, the agony, were all for my unhappy father at home in Muskegon, struggling for life and fortune against untoward chances, returning at night, from a day of ill-starred shifts and ventures, to read and perhaps to weep over that last harsh letter from his only child, to which he lacked the courage to reply.

Nearly three months after time, and when my economies were beginning to run low, I received at last a letter with the customary bills of exchange.

'My dearest boy,' it ran, 'I believe, in the press of anxious business, your letters, and even your allowance, have been somewhile neglected. You must try to forgive your poor old dad, for he has had a trying time; and now when it is over, the doctor wants me to take my shot-gun and go to the Adirondacks for a change. You must not fancy I am sick, only over-driven and under the weather. Many of our foremost operators have gone down: John T. M'Brady skipped to Canada with a trunkful of boodle; Billy Sandwith, Charlie Downs, Joe Kaiser, and many others of our leading men in this city bit the dust. But Big Head Dodd has again weathered the blizzard, and I think I have fixed things so that we may be richer than ever before autumn.

'Now I will tell you, my dear, what I propose.

You say you are well advanced with your first statue; start in manfully and finish it, and if your teacher—I can never remember how to spell his name—will send me a certificate that it is up to market standard, you shall have ten thousand dollars to do what you like with, either at home or in Paris. I suggest, since you say the facilities for work are so much greater in that city, you would do well to buy or build a little home; and the first thing you know, your dad will be dropping in for a luncheon. Indeed, I would come now—for I am beginning to grow old, and I long to see my dear boy,—but there are still some operations that want watching and nursing. Tell your friend Mr. Pinkerton that I read his letters every week; and though I have looked in vain lately for my Loudon's name, still I learn something of the life he is leading in that strange Old World depicted by an able pen.'

Here was a letter that no young man could possibly digest in solitude. It marked one of those junctures when the confidant is necessary; and the confidant selected was none other than Jim Pinkerton. My father's message may have had an influence in this decision; but I scarce suppose so, for the intimacy was already far advanced. I had a genuine and lively taste for my compatriot; I laughed at, I scolded, and I loved him. He, upon his side, paid me a kind of dog-like service of admiration, gazing at me from afar off, as at one who had liberally enjoyed those 'advantages' which he envied for himself. He followed at heel; his laugh was ready chorus; our

friends gave him the nickname of 'The Henchman.' It was in this insidious form that servitude approached me.

Pinkerton and I read and re-read the famous news: he, I can swear, with an enjoyment as unalloyed and far more vocal than my own. The statue was nearly done: a few days' work sufficed to prepare it for exhibition; the master was approached; he gave his consent; and one cloudless morning of May beheld us gathered in my studio for the hour of trial. The master wore his many-hued rosette; he came attended by two of my French fellow-pupils —friends of mine, and both considerable sculptors in Paris at this hour. 'Corporal John' (as we used to call him), breaking for once those habits of study and reserve which have since carried him so high in the opinion of the world, had left his easel of a morning to countenance a fellow-countryman in some suspense. My dear old Romney was there by particular request; for who that knew him would think a pleasure quite complete unless he shared it, or not support a mortification more easily if he were present to console? The party was completed by John Myner, the Englishman; by the brothers Stennis— Stennis-*aîné* and Stennis-*frère*, as they used to figure on their accounts at Barbizon—a pair of hare-brained Scots; and by the inevitable Jim, as white as a sheet and bedewed with the sweat of anxiety.

I suppose I was little better myself when I unveiled the Genius of Muskegon. The master walked about it seriously; then he smiled.

'It is already not so bad,' said he, in that funny English of which he was so proud; 'no, already not so bad.'

We all drew a deep breath of relief; and Corporal John (as the most considerable junior present) explained to him it was intended for a public building, a kind of prefecture.

'*Hé! quoi?*' cried he, relapsing into French. '*Qu'est-ce que vous me chantez là?* O, in América,' he added, on further information being hastily furnished. 'That is anozer sing. O, véry good—véry good.'

The idea of the required certificate had to be introduced to his mind in the light of a pleasantry—the fancy of a nabob little more advanced than the Red Indians of 'Fénnimore Cooperr'; and it took all our talents combined to conceive a form of words that would be acceptable on both sides. One was found, however: Corporal John engrossed it in his undecipherable hand, the master lent it the sanction of his name and flourish, I slipped it into an envelope along with one of the two letters I had ready prepared in my pocket, and as the rest of us moved off along the boulevard to breakfast, Pinkerton was detached in a cab and duly committed it to the post.

The breakfast was ordered at Lavenue's, where no one need be ashamed to entertain even the master; the table was laid in the garden; I had chosen the bill of fare myself; on the wine question we held a council of war, with the most fortunate results; and

the talk, as soon as the master laid aside his painful English, became fast and furious. There were a few interruptions, indeed, in the way of toasts. The master's health had to be drunk, and he responded in a little well-turned speech, full of neat allusions to my future and to the United States; my health followed; and then my father's must not only be proposed and drunk, but a full report must be despatched to him at once by cablegram—an extravagance which was almost the means of the master's dissolution. Choosing Corporal John to be his confidant (on the ground, I presume, that he was already too good an artist to be any longer an American except in name) he summed up his amazement in one oft-repeated formula—'*C'est barbare!*' Apart from these genial formalities, we talked, talked of art, and talked of it as only artists can. Here in the South Seas we talk schooners most of the time; in the Quarter we talked art with the like unflagging interest, and perhaps as much result.

Before very long the master went away; Corporal John (who was already a sort of young master) followed on his heels; and the rank and file were naturally relieved by their departure. We were now among equals; the bottle passed, the conversation sped. I think I can still hear the Stennis brothers pour forth their copious tirades; Dijon, my portly French fellow-student, drop witticisms, well-conditioned like himself; and another (who was weak in foreign languages) dash hotly into the current of talk with some '*Je trove que pore oon*

sontimong de delicacy, Corot . . .,' or some '*Pour moi Corot est le plou . . .*,' and then, his little raft of French foundering at once, scramble silently to shore again. He at least could understand; but to Pinkerton, I think the noise, the wine, the sun, the shadows of the leaves, and the esoteric glory of being seated at a foreign festival, made up the whole available means of entertainment.

We sat down about half-past eleven; I suppose it was two when, some point arising and some particular picture being instanced, an adjournment to the Louvre was proposed. I paid the score, and in a moment we were trooping down the Rue de Renne. It was smoking hot; Paris glittered with that superficial brilliancy which is so agreeable to the man in high spirits, and in moods of dejection so depressing; the wine sang in my ears, it danced and brightened in my eyes. The pictures that we saw that afternoon, as we sped briskly and loquaciously through the immortal galleries, appear to me, upon a retrospect, the loveliest of all; the comments we exchanged to have touched the highest mark of criticism, grave or gay.

It was only when we issued again from the museum that a difference of race broke up the party. Dijon proposed an adjournment to a café, there to finish the afternoon on beer; the elder Stennis revolted at the thought, moved for the country—a forest, if possible—and a long walk. At once the English speakers rallied to the name of any exercise; even to me, who have been often twitted with my

sedentary habits, the thought of country air and stillness proved invincibly attractive. It appeared, upon investigation, we had just time to hail a cab and catch one of the fast trains for Fontainebleau. Beyond the clothes we stood in all were destitute of what is called, with dainty vagueness, personal effects; and it was earnestly mooted, on the other side, whether we had not time to call upon the way and pack a satchel? But the Stennis boys exclaimed upon our effeminacy. They had come from London, it appeared, a week before with nothing but great-coats and tooth-brushes. No baggage—there was the secret of existence. It was expensive, to be sure, for every time you had to comb your hair a barber must be paid, and every time you changed your linen one shirt must be bought and another thrown away; but anything was better, argued these young gentlemen, than to be the slaves of haversacks. 'A fellow has to get rid gradually of all material attachments: that was manhood,' said they; 'and as long as you were bound down to anything—house, umbrella, or portmanteau—you were still tethered by the umbilical cord.' Something engaging in this theory carried the most of us away. The two Frenchmen, indeed, retired scoffing to their bock, and Romney, being too poor to join the excursion on his own resources, and too proud to borrow, melted unobtrusively away. Meanwhile the remainder of the company crowded the benches of a cab; the horse was urged, as horses have to be, by an appeal to the pocket of the driver; the train

caught by the inside of a minute; and in less than an hour and a half we were breathing deep of the sweet air of the forest, and stretching our legs up the hill from Fontainebleau octroi, bound for Barbizon. That the leading members of our party covered the distance in fifty-one minutes and a half is, I believe, one of the historic landmarks of the colony; but you will scarce be surprised to learn that I was somewhat in the rear. Myner, a comparatively philosophic Briton, kept me company in my deliberate advance; the glory of the sun's going down, the fall of the long shadows, the inimitable scent, and the inspiration of the woods, attuned me more and more to walk in a silence which progressively infected my companion; and I remember that, when at last he spoke, I was startled from a deep abstraction.

'Your father seems to be a pretty good kind of a father,' said he. 'Why don't he come to see you?' I was ready with some dozen of reasons, and had more in stock; but Myner, with that shrewdness which made him feared and admired, suddenly fixed me with his eye-glass and asked, 'Ever press him?'

The blood came in my face. No, I had never pressed him; I had never even encouraged him to come. I was proud of him, proud of his handsome looks, of his kind, gentle ways, of that bright face he could show when others were happy; proud, too—meanly proud, if you like—of his great wealth and startling liberalities. And yet he would have been

in the way of my Paris life, of much of which he would have disapproved. I had feared to expose to criticism his innocent remarks on art; I had told myself, I had even partly believed, he did not want to come; I had been, and still am, convinced that he was sure to be unhappy out of Muskegon; in short, I had a thousand reasons, good and bad, not all of which could alter one iota of the fact that I knew he only waited for my invitation.

'Thank you, Myner,' said I; 'you're a much better fellow than ever I supposed. I'll write to-night.'

'O, you're a pretty decent sort yourself,' returned Myner, with more than his usual flippancy of manner, but, as I was gratefully aware, not a trace of his occasional irony of meaning.

Well, these were brave days, on which I could dwell for ever. Brave, too, were those that followed, when Pinkerton and I walked Paris and the suburbs, viewing and pricing houses for my new establishment, or covered ourselves with dust and returned laden with Chinese gods and brass warming-pans from the dealers in antiquities. I found Pinkerton well up in the situation of these establishments as well as in the current prices, and with quite a smattering of critical judgment. It turned out he was investing capital in pictures and curiosities for the States, and the superficial thoroughness of the creature appeared in the fact that although he would never be a connoisseur, he was already something of an expert. The things themselves left him

as near as may be cold, but he had a joy of his own in understanding how to buy and sell them.

In such engagements the time passed until I might very well expect an answer from my father. Two mails followed each other, and brought nothing. By the third I received a long and almost incoherent letter of remorse, encouragement, consolation, and despair. From this pitiful document, which (with a movement of piety) I burned as soon as I had read it, I gathered that the bubble of my father's wealth was burst, that he was now both penniless and sick; and that I, so far from expecting ten thousand dollars to throw away in juvenile extravagance, must look no longer for the quarterly remittances on which I lived. My case was hard enough; but I had sense enough to perceive, and decency enough to do, my duty. I sold my curiosities—or, rather, I sent Pinkerton to sell them; and he had previously bought, and now disposed of them, so wisely that the loss was trifling. This, with what remained of my last allowance, left me at the head of no less than five thousand francs. Five hundred I reserved for my own immediate necessities: the rest I mailed inside of the week to my father at Muskegon, where they came in time to pay his funeral expenses.

The news of his death was scarcely a surprise and scarce a grief to me. I could not conceive my father a poor man. He had led too long a life of thoughtless and generous profusion to endure the change; and though I grieved for myself, I was able to

rejoice that my father had been taken from the battle. I grieved, I say, for myself; and it is probable there were at the same date many thousands of persons grieving with less cause. I had lost my father; I had lost the allowance; my whole fortune (including what had been returned from Muskegon) scarce amounted to a thousand francs; and, to crown my sorrows, the statuary contract had changed hands. The new contractor had a son of his own, or else a nephew; and it was signified to me, with business-like plainness, that I must find another market for my pigs. In the meanwhile I had given up my room, and slept on a truckle-bed in the corner of the studio, where, as I read myself to sleep at night, and when I awoke in the morning, that now useless bulk, the Genius of Muskegon, was ever present to my eyes. Poor stone lady! born to be enthroned under the gilded, echoing dome of the new capitol, whither was she now to drift? for what base purposes be ultimately broken up, like an unseaworthy ship? and what should befall her ill-starred artificer, standing with his thousand francs on the threshold of a life so hard as that of the unbefriended sculptor?

It was a subject often and earnestly debated by myself and Pinkerton. In his opinion I should instantly discard my profession. 'Just drop it, here and now,' he would say. 'Come back home with me, and let 's throw our whole soul into business. I have the capital; you bring the culture. *Dodd and Pinkerton*—I never saw a better name for an advertisement; and you can't think, Loudon, how

much depends upon a name.' On my side I would admit that a sculptor should possess one of three things—capital, influence, or an energy only to be qualified as hellish. The first two I had now lost; to the third I never had the smallest claim; and yet I wanted the cowardice (or, perhaps it was the courage) to turn my back on my career without a fight. I told him, besides, that however poor my chances were in sculpture, I was convinced they were yet worse in business, for which I equally lacked taste and aptitude. But upon this head he was my father over again; assured me that I spoke in ignorance; that any intelligent and cultured person was bound to succeed; that I must, besides, have inherited some of my father's fitness; and, at any rate, that I had been regularly trained for that career in the commercial college.

'Pinkerton,' I said, 'can't you understand that, as long as I was there, I never took the smallest interest in any stricken thing? The whole affair was poison to me.'

'It's not possible,' he would cry; 'it can't be; you couldn't live in the midst of it and not feel the charm; with all your poetry of soul you couldn't help! Loudon,' he would go on, 'you drive me crazy. You expect a man to be all broken up about the sunset, and not to care a dime for a place where fortunes are fought for and made and lost all day; or for a career that consists in studying up life till you have it at your finger-ends, spying out every cranny where you can get your hand in and a dollar

out, and standing there in the midst—one foot on bankruptcy, the other on a borrowed dollar, and the whole thing spinning round you like a mill—raking in the stamps, in spite of fate and fortune.'

To this romance of dickering I would reply with the romance (which is also the virtue) of art: reminding him of those examples of constancy through many tribulations, with which the *rôle* of Apollo is illustrated—from the case of Millet, to those of many of our friends and comrades, who had chosen this agreeable mountain path through life, and were now bravely clambering among rocks and brambles, penniless and hopeful.

'You will never understand it, Pinkerton,' I would say. 'You look to the result, you want to see some profit of your endeavours: that is why you could never learn to paint, if you lived to be Methusalem. The result is always a fizzle: the eyes of the artist are turned in; he lives for a frame of mind. Look at Romney now. There is the nature of the artist. He hasn't a cent; and if you offered him to-morrow the command of an army, or the presidentship of the United States, he wouldn't take it, and you know he wouldn't.'

'I suppose not,' Pinkerton would cry, scouring his hair with both his hands; 'and I can't see why; I can't see what in fits he would be after, not to; I don't seem to rise to these views. Of course it 's the fault of not having had advantages in early life; but, Loudon, I 'm so miserably low that it seems to me silly. The fact is,' he might add, with a smile,

'I don't seem to have the least use for a frame of mind without square meals; and you can't get it out of my head that it 's a man's duty to die rich, if he can.'

'What for?' I asked him once.

'O, I don't know,' he replied. 'Why in snakes should anybody want to be a sculptor, if you come to that? I would love to sculp myself. But what I can't see is why you should want to do nothing else. It seems to argue a poverty of nature.'

Whether or not he ever came to understand me—and I have been so tossed about since then that I am not very sure I understand myself—he soon perceived that I was perfectly in earnest; and after about ten days of argument, suddenly dropped the subject, and announced that he was wasting capital, and must go home at once. No doubt he should have gone long before, and had already lingered over his intended time for the sake of our companionship and my misfortune; but man is so unjustly minded that the very fact, which ought to have disarmed, only embittered my vexation. I resented his departure in the light of a desertion; I would not say, but doubtless I betrayed it; and something hang-dog in the man's face and bearing led me to believe he was himself remorseful. It is certain at least that, during the time of his preparations, we drew sensibly apart—a circumstance that I recall with shame. On the last day he had me to dinner at a restaurant which he knew I had formerly frequented, and had only forsworn of late from considerations of economy.

He seemed ill at ease; I was myself both sorry and sulky; and the meal passed with little conversation.

'Now, Loudon,' said he, with a visible effort, after the coffee was come and our pipes lighted, 'you can never understand the gratitude and loyalty I bear you. You don't know what a boon it is to be taken up by a man that stands on the pinnacle of civilisation; you can't think how it 's refined and purified me, how it 's appealed to my spiritual nature; and I want to tell you that I would die at your door like a dog.'

I don't know what answer I tried to make, but he cut me short.

'Let me say it out!' he cried. 'I revere you for your whole-souled devotion to art; I can't rise to it, but there 's a strain of poetry in my nature, Loudon, that responds to it. I want you to carry it out, and I mean to help you.'

'Pinkerton, what nonsense is this?' I interrupted.

'Now don't get mad, Loudon; this is a plain piece of business,' said he; 'it 's done every day; it 's even typical. How are all those fellows over here in Paris, Henderson, Sumner, Long?—it 's all the same story: a young man just plum full of artistic genius on the one side, a man of business on the other who doesn't know what to do with his dollars——'

'But, you fool, you 're as poor as a rat,' I cried.

'You wait till I get my irons in the fire!' returned Pinkerton. 'I 'm bound to be rich; and I tell you I mean to have some of the fun as I go along. Here 's

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your first allowance; take it at the hand of a friend; I 'm one that holds friendship sacred, as you do yourself. It 's only a hundred francs; you 'll get the same every month, and as soon as my business begins to expand we 'll increase it to something fitting. And so far from its being a favour, just let me handle your statuary for the American market, and I 'll call it one of the smartest strokes of business in my life.'

It took me a long time, and it had cost us both much grateful and painful emotion, before I had finally managed to refuse his offer and compounded for a bottle of particular wine. He dropped the subject at last suddenly with a 'Never mind; that 's all done with'; nor did he again refer to the subject, though we passed together the rest of the afternoon, and I accompanied him, on his departure, to the doors of the waiting-room at St. Lazare. I felt myself strangely alone; a voice told me that I had rejected both the counsels of wisdom and the helping hand of friendship; and as I passed through the great bright city on my homeward way, I measured it for the first time with the eye of an adversary.

CHAPTER V

IN WHICH I AM DOWN ON MY LUCK IN PARIS

In no part of the world is starvation an agreeable business; but I believe it is admitted there is no worse place to starve in than this city of Paris. The appearances of life are there so especially gay, it is so much a magnified beer-garden, the houses are so ornate, the theatres so numerous, the very pace of the vehicles is so brisk, that a man in any deep concern of mind or pain of body is constantly driven in upon himself. In his own eyes, he seems the one serious creature moving in a world of horrible unreality; voluble people issuing from a café, the *queue* at theatre-doors, Sunday cabfuls of second-rate pleasure-seekers, the bedizened ladies of the pavement, the show in the jewellers' windows—all the familiar sights contributing to flout his own unhappiness, want, and isolation. At the same time, if he be at all after my pattern, he is perhaps supported by a childish satisfaction. 'This is life at last,' he may tell himself; 'this is the real thing. The bladders on which I was set swimming are now

empty; my own weight depends upon the ocean: by my own exertions I must perish or succeed; and I am now enduring, in the vivid fact, what I so much delighted to read of in the case of Lousteau or Lucien, Rodolphe or Schaunard.'

Of the steps of my misery I cannot tell at length. In ordinary times what were politically called 'loans' (although they were never meant to be repaid) were matters of constant course among the students, and many a man has partly lived on them for years. But my misfortune befell me at an awkward juncture. Many of my friends were gone; others were themselves in a precarious situation. Romney (for instance) was reduced to tramping Paris in a pair of country sabots, his only suit of clothes so imperfect (in spite of cunningly-adjusted pins) that the authorities at the Luxembourg suggested his withdrawal from the gallery. Dijon, too, was on a lee-shore, designing clocks and gas-brackets for a dealer; and the most he could do was to offer me a corner of his studio where I might work. My own studio (it will be gathered) I had by that time lost; and in the course of my expulsion the Genius of Muskegon was finally separated from her author. To continue to possess a full-sized statue, a man must have a studio, a gallery, or at least the freedom of a back-garden. He cannot carry it about with him, like a satchel, in the bottom of a cab, nor can he cohabit in a garret ten by fifteen with so momentous a companion. It was my first idea to leave her behind at my departure. There, in her birthplace,

she might lend an inspiration, methought, to my successor. But the proprietor, with whom I had unhappily quarrelled, seized the occasion to be disagreeable, and called upon me to remove my property. For a man in such straits as I now found myself, the hire of a lorry was a consideration; and yet even that I could have faced, if I had had anywhere to drive to after it was hired. Hysterical laughter seized upon me as I beheld (in imagination) myself, the waggoner, and the Genius of Muskegon, standing in the public view of Paris, without the shadow of a destination; perhaps driving at last to the nearest rubbish-heap, and dumping there, among the ordures of a city, the beloved child of my invention. From these extremities I was relieved by a seasonable offer, and I parted from the Genius of Muskegon for thirty francs. Where she now stands, under what name she is admired or criticised, history does not inform us; but I like to think she may adorn the shrubbery of some suburban tea-garden, where holiday shop-girls hang their hats upon the mother, and their swains (by way of an approach of gallantry) identify the winged infant with the god of love.

In a certain cabman's eating-house on the outer boulevard I got credit for my midday meal. Supper I was supposed not to require, sitting down nightly to the delicate table of some rich acquaintances. This arrangement was extremely ill-considered. My fable, credible enough at first, and so long as my clothes were in good order, must have seemed worse

than doubtful after my coat became frayed about the edges, and my boots began to squelch and pipe along the restaurant floors. The allowance of one meal a day, besides, though suitable enough to the state of my finances, agreed poorly with my stomach. The restaurant was a place I had often visited experimentally, to taste the life of students then more unfortunate than myself; and I had never in those days entered it without disgust, or left it without nausea. It was strange to find myself sitting down with avidity, rising up with satisfaction, and counting the hours that divided me from my return to such a table. But hunger is a great magician; and so soon as I had spent my ready cash, and could no longer fill up on bowls of chocolate or hunks of bread, I must depend entirely on that cabman's eating-house, and upon certain rare, long-expected, long-remembered windfalls. Dijon (for instance) might get paid for some of his pot-boiling work, or else an old friend would pass through Paris; and then I would be entertained to a meal after my own soul, and contract a Latin Quarter loan, which would keep me in tobacco and my morning coffee for a fortnight. It might be thought the latter would appear the more important. It might be supposed that a life, led so near the confines of actual famine, should have dulled the nicety of my palate. On the contrary, the poorer a man's diet, the more sharply is he set on dainties. The last of my ready cash, about thirty francs, was deliberately squandered on a single dinner; and a great part of

my time when I was alone was passed upon the details of imaginary feasts.

One gleam of hope visited me—an order for a bust from a rich Southerner. He was free-handed, jolly of speech, merry of countenance; kept me in good-humour through the sittings, and, when they were over, carried me off with him to dinner and the sights of Paris. I ate well, I laid on flesh; by all accounts I made a favourable likeness of the being, and I confess I thought my future was assured. But when the bust was done, and I had despatched it across the Atlantic, I could never so much as learn of its arrival. The blow felled me; I should have lain down and tried no stroke to right myself, had not the honour of my country been involved. For Dijon improved the opportunity in the European style, informing me (for the first time) of the manners of America: how it was a den of banditti, without the smallest rudiment of law or order, and debts could be there only collected with a shot-gun. 'The whole world knows it,' he would say; 'you are alone, *mon petit* Loudon—you are alone, to be in ignorance of these facts. The judges of the Supreme Court fought but the other day with stilettos on the bench at Cincinnati. You should read the little book of one of my friends, *Le Touriste dans le Far-West*; you will see it all there in good French.' At last, incensed by days of such discussion, I undertook to prove to him the contrary, and put the affair in the hands of my late father's lawyer. From him I had the gratification of hearing, after a due interval,

that my debtor was dead of the yellow fever in Key West, and had left his affairs in some confusion. I suppress his name; for though he treated me with cruel nonchalance, it is probable he meant to deal fairly in the end.

Soon after this a shade of change in my reception at the cabman's eating-house marked the beginning of a new phase in my distress. The first day I told myself it was but fancy; the next, I made quite sure it was a fact; the third, in mere panic I stayed away, and went for forty-eight hours fasting. This was an act of great unreason; for the debtor who stays away is but the more remarked, and the boarder who misses a meal is sure to be accused of infidelity. On the fourth day, therefore, I returned, inwardly quaking. The proprietor looked askance upon my entrance; the waitresses (who were his daughters) neglected my wants, and sniffed at the affected joviality of my salutations; last, and most plain, when I called for a *suisse* (such as was being served to all the other diners), I was bluntly told there were no more. It was obvious I was near the end of my tether; one plank divided me from want, and now I felt it tremble. I passed a sleepless night, and the first thing in the morning took my way to Myner's studio. It was a step I had long meditated and long refrained from; for I was scarce intimate with the Englishman; and though I knew him to possess plenty of money, neither his manner nor his reputation were the least encouraging to beggars.

I found him at work on a picture, which I was able conscientiously to praise, dressed in his usual tweeds—plain, but pretty fresh, and standing out in disagreeable contrast to my own withered and degraded outfit. As we talked, he continued to shift his eyes watchfully between his handiwork and the fat model, who sat at the far end of the studio in a state of nature, with one arm gallantly arched above her head. My errand would have been difficult enough under the best of circumstances: placed between Myner, immersed in his art, and the white, fat, naked female in a ridiculous attitude, I found it quite impossible. Again and again I attempted to approach the point, again and again fell back on commendations of the picture; and it was not until the model had enjoyed an interval of repose, during which she took the conversation in her own hands and regaled us (in a soft, weak voice) with details as to her husband's prosperity, her sister's lamented decline from the paths of virtue, and the consequent wrath of her father, a peasant of stern principles, in the vicinity of Châlons on the Marne—it was not, I say, until after this was over, and I had once more cleared my throat for the attack, and once more dropped aside into some commonplace about the picture, that Myner himself brought me suddenly and vigorously to the point.

'You didn't come here to talk this rot,' said he.

'No,' I replied sullenly; 'I came to borrow money.'

He painted a while in silence.

'I don't think we were ever very intimate?' he asked.

'Thank you,' said I. 'I can take my answer,' and I made as if to go, rage boiling in my heart.

'Of course you can go if you like,' said Myner, 'but I advise you to stay and have it out.'

'What more is there to say?' I cried. 'You don't want to keep me here for a needless humiliation?'

'Look here, Dodd; you must try and command your temper,' said he. 'This interview is of your own seeking, and not mine; if you suppose it 's not disagreeable to me, you 're wrong; and if you think I will give you money without knowing thoroughly about your prospects, you take me for a fool. Besides,' he added, 'if you come to look at it, you 've got over the worst of it by now: you have done the asking, and you have every reason to know I mean to refuse. I hold out no false hopes, but it may be worth your while to let me judge.'

Thus—I was going to say—encouraged, I stumbled through my story; told him I had credit at the cabman's eating-house, but began to think it was drawing to a close; how Dijon lent me a corner of his studio, where I tried to model ornaments, figures for clocks, Time with the scythe, Leda and the swan, musketeers for candlesticks, and other kickshaws, which had never (up to that day) been honoured with the least approval.

'And your room?' asked Myner.

'O, my room is all right, I think,' said I. 'She

is a very good old lady, and has never even mentioned her bill.'

'Because she is a very good old lady, I don't see why she should be fined,' observed Myner.

'What do you mean by that?' I cried.

'I mean this,' said he. 'The French give a great deal of credit amongst themselves; they find it pays on the whole, or the system would hardly be continued; but I can't see where *we* come in; I can't see that it's honest of us Anglo-Saxons to profit by their easy ways, and then skip over the Channel or (as you Yankees do) across the Atlantic.'

'But I'm not proposing to skip,' I objected.

'Exactly,' he replied. 'And shouldn't you? There's the problem. You seem to me to have a lack of sympathy for the proprietors of cabmen's eating-houses. By your own account you're not getting on; the longer you stay, it'll only be the more out of the pocket of the dear old lady at your lodgings. Now, I'll tell you what I'll do: if you consent to go, I'll pay your passage to New York, and your railway fare and expenses to Muskegon (if I have the name right), where your father lived, where he must have left friends, and where, no doubt, you'll find an opening. I don't seek any gratitude, for of course you'll think me a beast; but I do ask you to pay it back when you are able. At any rate, that's all I can do. It might be different if I thought you a genius, Dodd; but I don't, and I advise you not to.'

'I think that was uncalled for, at least,' said I.

'I daresay it was,' he returned with the same steadiness. 'It seemed to me pertinent; and, besides, when you ask me for money upon no security, you treat me with the liberty of a friend, and it's to be presumed that I can do the like. But the point is, do you accept?'

'No, thank you,' said I; 'I have another string to my bow.'

'All right,' says Myner; 'be sure it's honest.'

'Honest? honest?' I cried. 'What do you mean by calling my honesty in question?'

'I won't, if you don't like it,' he replied. 'You seem to think honesty as easy as Blind Man's Buff: I don't. It's some difference of definition.'

I went straight from this irritating interview, during which Myner had never discontinued painting, to the studio of my old master. Only one card remained for me to play, and I was now resolved to play it: I must drop the gentleman and the frock-coat, and approach art in the workman's tunic.

'*Tiens*, this little Dodd!' cried the master; and then, as his eye fell on my dilapidated clothing, I thought I could perceive his countenance to darken.

I made my plea in English; for I knew, if he were vain of anything, it was of his achievement of the island tongue. 'Master,' said I, 'will you take me in your studio again—but this time as a workman?'

'I sought your fazér was immensely reech?' said he.

I explained to him that I was now an orphan, and penniless.

He shook his head. 'I have betterr workmen waiting at my door,' said he, 'far betterr workmen.'

'You used to think something of my work, sir,' I pleaded.

'Somesing, somesing—yés!' he cried; 'énough for a son of a reech man—not énough for an orphan. Besides, I sought you might learn to be an artist; I did not sink you might learn to be a workman.'

On a certain bench on the outer boulevard, not far from the tomb of Napoleon—a bench shaded at that date by a shabby tree, and commanding a view of muddy roadway and blank wall—I sat down to wrestle with my misery. The weather was cheerless and dark; in three days I had eaten but once; I had no tobacco; my shoes were soaked, my trousers horrid with mire; my humour and all the circumstances of the time and place lugubriously attuned. Here were two men who had both spoken fairly of my work while I was rich and wanted nothing; now that I was poor and lacked all: 'No genius,' said the one; 'not enough for an orphan,' the other; and the first offered me my passage like a pauper immigrant, and the second refused me a day's wage as a hewer of stone—plain dealing for an empty belly. They had not been insincere in the past; they were not insincere to-day: change of circumstance had introduced a new criterion, that was all.

But if I acquitted my two Job's comforters of insincerity, I was yet far from admitting them infal-

lible. Artists had been contemned before, and had lived to turn the laugh on their contemners. How old was Corot before he struck the vein of his own precious metal? When had a young man been more derided (or more justly so) than the god of my admiration, Balzac? Or, if I required a bolder inspiration, what had I to do but turn my head to where the gold dome of the Invalides glittered against inky squalls, and recall the tale of him sleeping there: from the day when a young artillery sub could be giggled at and nicknamed Puss-in-Boots by frisky misses, on to the days of so many crowns and so many victories, and so many hundred mouths of cannon, and so many thousand war-hoofs trampling the roadways of astonished Europe eighty miles in front of the grand army? To go back, to give up, to proclaim myself a failure, an ambitious failure—first a rocket, then a stick! I, Loudon Dodd, who had refused all other livelihoods with scorn, and been advertised in the Saint Joseph *Sunday Herald* as a patriot and an artist, to be returned upon my native Muskegon like damaged goods, and go the circuit of my father's acquaintance, cap in hand, and begging to sweep offices! No, by Napoleon! I would die at my chosen trade; and the two who had that day flouted me should live to envy my success, or to weep tears of unavailing penitence behind my pauper coffin.

Meantime, if my courage was still undiminished, I was none the nearer to a meal. At no great distance my cabman's eating-house stood, at the tail of a

muddy cab-rank, on the shores of a wide thoroughfare of mud, offering (to fancy) a face of ambiguous invitation. I might be received, I might once more fill my belly there; on the other hand, it was perhaps this day the bolt was destined to fall, and I might be expelled instead, with vulgar hubbub. It was policy to make the attempt, and I knew it was policy; but I had already, in the course of that one morning, endured too many affronts, and I felt I could rather starve than face another. I had courage and to spare for the future, none left for that day; courage for the main campaign, but not a spark of it for that preliminary skirmish of the cabman's restaurant. I continued accordingly to sit upon my bench, not far from the ashes of Napoleon, now drowsy, now light-headed, now in complete mental obstruction, or only conscious of an animal pleasure in quiescence; and now thinking, planning, and remembering with unexampled clearness, telling myself tales of sudden wealth, and gustfully ordering and greedily consuming imaginary meals, in the course of which I must have dropped asleep.

It was towards dark that I was suddenly recalled to famine by a cold souse of rain, and sprang shivering to my feet. For a moment I stood bewildered; the whole train of my reasoning and dreaming passed afresh through my mind; I was again tempted, drawn as if with cords, by the image of the cabman's eating-house, and again recoiled from the possibility of insult. '*Qui dort dîne*,' thought I to myself; and took my homeward way with wavering footsteps,

through rainy streets in which the lamps and the shop-windows now began to gleam, still marshalling imaginary dinners as I went.

'Ah, Monsieur Dodd,' said the porter, 'there has been a registered letter for you. The facteur will bring it again to-morrow.'

A registered letter for me, who had been so long without one? Of what it could possibly contain I had no vestige of a guess, nor did I delay myself guessing; far less form any conscious plan of dishonesty: the lies flowed from me like a natural secretion.

'Oh,' said I, 'my remittance at last! What a bother I should have missed it! Can you lend me a hundred francs until to-morrow?'

I had never attempted to borrow from the porter till that moment; the registered letter was, besides, my warranty; and he gave me what he had—three napoleons and some francs in silver. I pocketed the money carelessly, lingered a while chaffing, strolled leisurely to the door; and then (fast as my trembling legs could carry me) round the corner to the Café de Cluny. French waiters are deft and speedy; they were not deft enough for me: and I had scarce decency to let the man set the wine upon the table or put the butter alongside the bread, before my glass and my mouth were filled. Exquisite bread of the Café Cluny, exquisite first glass of old Pomard tingling to my wet feet, indescribable first olive culled from the *hors d'œuvre*—I suppose, when I come to lie dying, and the lamp begins to grow dim,

I shall still recall your savour. Over the rest of that meal, and the rest of the evening, clouds lie thick; clouds perhaps of Burgundy: perhaps, more properly, of famine and repletion.

I remember clearly, at least, the shame, the despair, of the next morning, when I reviewed what I had done, and how I had swindled the poor honest porter: and, as if that were not enough, fairly burnt my ships, and brought bankruptcy home to that last refuge, my garret. The porter would expect his money; I could not pay him; here was scandal in the house; and I knew right well the cause of scandal would have to pack. 'What do you mean by calling my honesty in question?' I had cried the day before, turning upon Myner. Ah, that day before! the day before Waterloo, the day before the Flood; the day before I had sold the roof over my head, my future, and my self-respect, for a dinner at the Café Cluny!

In the midst of these lamentations the famous registered letter came to my door, with healing under its seal. It bore the postmark of San Francisco, where Pinkerton was already struggling to the neck in multifarious affairs; it renewed the offer of an allowance, which his improved estate permitted him to announce at the figure of two hundred francs a month; and in case I was in some immediate pinch, it enclosed an introductory draft for forty dollars. There are a thousand excellent reasons why a man, in this self-helpful epoch, should decline to be dependent on another; but the most numerous

and cogent considerations all bow to a necessity as stern as mine; and the banks were scarce open ere the draft was cashed.

It was early in December that I thus sold myself into slavery, and for six months I dragged a slowly lengthening chain of gratitude and uneasiness. At the cost of some debt I managed to excel myself and eclipse the Genius of Muskegon, in a small but highly patriotic 'Standard Bearer' for the Salon; whither it was duly admitted, where it stood the proper length of days entirely unremarked, and whence it came back to me as patriotic as before. I threw my whole soul (as Pinkerton would have phrased it) into clocks and candlesticks; the devil a candlestick-maker would have anything to say to my designs. Even when Dijon, with his infinite good-humour and infinite scorn for all such journey-work, consented to peddle them in indiscriminately with his own, the dealers still detected and rejected mine. Home they returned to me, true as the Standard Bearer, who now, at the head of quite a regiment of lesser idols, began to grow an eyesore in the scanty studio of my friend. Dijon and I have sat by the hour, and gazed upon that company of images. The severe, the frisky, the classical, the Louis Quinze, were there—from Joan of Arc in her soldierly cuirass to Leda with the swan; nay—and God forgive me for a man that knew better!—the humorous was represented also. We sat and gazed, I say; we criticised, we turned them hither and thither; even upon the closest inspection they looked

quite like statuettes; and yet nobody would have a gift of them!

Vanity dies hard; in some obstinate cases it outlives the man: but about the sixth month, when I already owed near two hundred dollars to Pinkerton, and half as much again in debts scattered about Paris, I awoke one morning with a horrid sentiment of oppression, and found I was alone; my vanity had breathed her last during the night. I dared not plunge deeper in the bog; I saw no hope in my poor statuary; I owned myself beaten at last; and sitting down in my night-shirt, beside the window, whence I had a glimpse of the tree-tops at the corner of the boulevard, and where the music of its early traffic fell agreeably upon my ear, I penned my farewell to Paris, to art, to my whole past life, and my whole former self. 'I give in,' I wrote. 'When the next allowance arrives, I shall go straight out West, where you can do what you like with me.'

It is to be understood that Pinkerton had been, in a sense, pressing me to come from the beginning; depicting his isolation among new acquaintances, 'who have none of them your culture,' he wrote; expressing his friendship in terms so warm that it sometimes embarrassed me to think how poorly I could echo them; dwelling upon his need for assistance; and the next moment turning about to commend my resolution and press me to remain in Paris. 'Only remember, Loudon,' he would write, 'if you ever *do* tire of it, there's plenty of work here for

you—honest, hard, well-paid work, developing the resources of this practically virgin State. And, of course, I needn't say what a pleasure it would be to me if we were going at it *shoulder to shoulder.*' I marvel, looking back, that I could so long have resisted these appeals, and continue to sink my friend's money in a manner that I knew him to dislike. At least, when I did awake to any sense of my position, I awoke to it entirely, and determined not only to follow his counsel for the future, but, even as regards the past, to rectify his losses. For in this juncture of affairs I called to mind that I was not without a possible resource, and resolved, at whatever cost of mortification, to beard the Loudon family in their historic city.

In the excellent Scots phrase, I made a moonlight flitting, a thing never dignified, but in my case unusually easy. As I had scarce a pair of boots worth portage I deserted the whole of my effects without a pang. Dijon fell heir to Joan of Arc, the Standard Bearer, and the Musketeers. He was present when I bought and frugally stocked my new portmanteau, and it was at the door of the trunk-shop that I took my leave of him, for my last few hours in Paris must be spent alone. It was alone, and at a far higher figure than my finances warranted, that I discussed my dinner; alone that I took my ticket at Saint Lazare; all alone, though in a carriage full of people, that I watched the moon shine on the Seine flood with its tufted isles, on Rouen with her spires, and on the shipping in the

harbour of Dieppe. When the first light of the morning called me from troubled slumbers on the deck, I beheld the dawn at first with pleasure; I watched with pleasure the green shores of England rising out of rosy haze; I took the salt air with delight into my nostrils; and then all came back to me—that I was no longer an artist, no longer myself; that I was leaving all I cared for, and returning to all that I detested, the slave of debt and gratitude, a public and a branded failure.

From this picture of my own disgrace and wretchedness it is not wonderful if my mind turned with relief to the thought of Pinkerton waiting for me, as I knew, with unwearied affection, and regarding me with a respect that I had never deserved, and might therefore fairly hope that I should never forfeit. The inequality of our relation struck me rudely. I must have been stupid, indeed, if I could have considered the history of that friendship without shame—I who had given so little, who had accepted and profited by so much. I had the whole day before me in London, and I determined, at least in words, to set the balance somewhat straighter. Seated in the corner of a public place, and calling for sheet after sheet of paper, I poured forth the expression of my gratitude, my penitence for the past, my resolutions for the future. Till now, I told him, my course had been mere selfishness. I had been selfish to my father and to my friend, taking their help and denying them (which was all

they asked) the poor gratification of my company and countenance.

Wonderful are the consolations of literature! As soon as that letter was written and posted the consciousness of virtue glowed in my veins like some rare vintage.

CHAPTER VI

IN WHICH I GO WEST

I REACHED my uncle's door next morning in time to sit down with the family to breakfast. More than three years had intervened—almost without mutation in that stationary household—since I had sat there first, a young American freshman, bewildered among unfamiliar dainties (Finnan haddock, kippered salmon, baps, and mutton-ham), and had wearied my mind in vain to guess what should be under the tea-cosy. If there were any change at all, it seemed that I had risen in the family esteem. My father's death once fittingly referred to, with a ceremonial lengthening of Scots upper lips and wagging of the female head, the party launched at once (God help me!) into the more cheerful topic of my own successes. They had been so pleased to hear such good accounts of me; I was quite a great man now; where was that beautiful statue of the Genius of Something or other? 'You haven't it here? Not here? Really?' asks the sprightliest of my cousins, shaking curls at me; as though it were

likely I had brought it in a cab, or kept it concealed about my person like a birthday surprise. In the bosom of this family, unaccustomed to the tropical nonsense of the West, it became plain the *Sunday Herald* and poor blethering Pinkerton had been accepted for their face. It is not possible to invent a circumstance that could have more depressed me; and I am conscious that I behaved all through that breakfast like a whipped schoolboy.

At length, the meal and family prayers being both happily over, I requested the favour of an interview with Uncle Adam on 'the state of my affairs.' At sound of this ominous expression the good man's face conspicuously lengthened; and when my grandfather, having had the proposition repeated to him (for he was hard of hearing), announced his intention of being present at the interview, I could not but think that Uncle Adam's sorrow kindled into momentary irritation. Nothing, however, but the usual grim cordiality appeared upon the surface; and we all three passed ceremoniously to the adjoining library, a gloomy theatre for a depressing piece of business. My grandfather charged a clay pipe, and sat tremulously smoking in a corner of the fireless chimney; behind him, although the morning was both chill and dark, the window was partly open and the blind partly down: I cannot depict what an air he had of being out of place, like a man shipwrecked there. Uncle Adam had his station at the business-table in the midst. Valuable rows of books looked down upon the place of torture; and I

could hear sparrows chirping in the garden, and my sprightly cousin already banging the piano and pouring forth an acid stream of song from the drawing-room overhead.

It was in these circumstances that, with all brevity of speech and a certain boyish sullenness of manner, looking the while upon the floor, I informed my relatives of my financial situation: the amount I owed Pinkerton; the hopelessness of any maintenance from sculpture; the career offered me in the States; and how, before becoming more beholden to a stranger, I had judged it right to lay the case before my family.

'I am only sorry you did not come to me at first,' said Uncle Adam. 'I take the liberty to say it would have been more decent.'

'I think so too, Uncle Adam,' I replied; 'but you must bear in mind I was ignorant in what light you might regard my application.'

'I hope I would never turn my back on my own flesh and blood,' he returned with emphasis; but, to my anxious ear, with more of temper than affection. 'I could never forget you were my sister's son. I regard this as a manifest duty. I have no choice but to accept the entire responsibility of the position you have made.'

I did not know what else to do but murmur 'Thank you.'

'Yes,' he pursued, 'and there is something providential in the circumstance that you come at the right time. In my old firm there is a vacancy; they

call themselves Italian Warehousemen now,' he continued, regarding me with a twinkle of humour; 'so you may think yourself in luck: we were only grocers in my day. I shall place you there to-morrow.'

'Stop a moment, Uncle Adam,' I broke in. 'This is not at all what I am asking. I ask you to pay Pinkerton, who is a poor man. I ask you to clear my feet of debt, not to arrange my life or any part of it.'

'If I wished to be harsh, I might remind you that beggars cannot be choosers,' said my uncle; 'and as to managing your life, you have tried your own way already, and you see what you have made of it. You must now accept the guidance of those older and (whatever you may think of it) wiser than yourself. All these schemes of your friend (of whom I know nothing, by the by) and talk of openings in the West, I simply disregard. I have no idea whatever of your going troking across a continent on a wild-goose chase. In this situation, which I am fortunately able to place at your disposal, and which many a well-conducted young man would be glad to jump at, you will receive, to begin with, eighteen shillings a week.'

'Eighteen shillings a week!' I cried. 'Why, my poor friend gave me more than that for nothing!'

'And I think it is this very friend you are now trying to repay?' observed my uncle, with an air of one advancing a strong argument.

'Aadam,' said my grandfather.

'I 'm vexed you should be present at this business,' quoth Uncle Adam, swinging rather obsequiously towards the stonemason; 'but I must remind you it is of your own seeking.'

'Aadam!' repeated the old man.

'Well, sir, I am listening,' says my uncle.

My grandfather took a puff or two in silence: and then, 'Ye 're makin' an awfu' poor appearance, Aadam,' said he.

My uncle visibly reared at the affront. 'I 'm sorry you should think so,' said he, 'and still more sorry you should say so before present company.'

'A believe that; A ken that, Aadam,' returned old Loudon dryly; 'and the curiis thing is, I 'm no very carin'.—See here, ma man,' he continued, addressing himself to me. 'A 'm your grandfaither, amn't I not? Never you mind what Aadam says. A 'll see justice dune ye. A 'm rich.'

'Father,' said Uncle Adam, 'I would like one word with you in private.'

I rose to go.

'Set down upon your hinderlands,' cried my grandfather, almost savagely. 'If Aadam has anything to say, let him say it. It 's me that has the money here; and, by Gravy! I 'm goin' to be obeyed.'

Upon this scurvy encouragement it appeared that my uncle had no remark to offer: twice challenged to 'speak out and be done with it,' he twice sullenly declined; and I may mention that about this period of the engagement I began to be sorry for him.

'See here, then, Jeannie's yin!' resumed my grandfather. 'A 'm goin' to give ye a set-off. Your mither was always my fav'rite, for A never could agree with Aadam. A like ye fine yoursel'; there 's nae noansense aboot ye; ye 've a fine nayteral idee of builder's work; ye 've been to France, where, they tell me, they 're grand at the stuccy. A splendid thing for ceilin's the stuccy! and it 's a vailyable disguise, too; A don't believe there 's a builder in Scotland has used more stuccy than me. But, as A was sayin', if ye 'll follie that trade, with the capital that A 'm goin' to give ye, ye may live yet to be as rich as mysel'. Ye see, ye would have always had a share of it when A was gone; it appears ye 're needin' it now; well, ye 'll get the less, as is only just and proper.'

Uncle Adam cleared his throat. 'This is very handsome, father,' said he; 'and I am sure Loudon feels it so. Very handsome, and, as you say, very just; but will you allow me to say that it had better, perhaps, be put in black and white?'

The enmity always smouldering between the two men, at this ill-judged interruption almost burst in flame. The stonemason turned upon his offspring, his long upper lip pulled down for all the world like a monkey's. He stared a while in virulent silence; and then 'Get Gregg!' said he.

The effect of these words was very visible. 'He will be gone to his office,' stammered my uncle.

'Get Gregg!' repeated my grandfather.

'I tell you, he will be gone to his office,' reiterated Adam.

'And I tell ye, he 's takin' his smoke,' retorted the old man.

'Very well, then,' cried my uncle, getting to his feet with some alacrity, as upon a sudden change of thought, 'I will get him myself.'

'Ye will not!' cried my grandfather. 'Ye will sit there upon your hinderland.'

'Then how the devil am I to get him?' my uncle broke forth, with not unnatural petulance.

My grandfather (having no possible answer) grinned at his son with the malice of a schoolboy; then he rang the bell.

'Take the garden key,' said Uncle Adam to the servant; 'go over to the garden, and if Mr. Gregg the lawyer is there (he generally sits under the red hawthorn), give him old Mr. Loudon's compliments, and will he step in here for a moment?'

'Mr. Gregg the lawyer!' At once I understood (what had been puzzling me) the significance of my grandfather and the alarm of my poor uncle: the stonemason's will, it was supposed, hung trembling in the balance.

'Look here, grandfather,' I said, 'I didn't want any of this. All I wanted was a loan of, say, two hundred pounds. I can take care of myself; I have prospects and opportunities, good friends in the States——'

The old man waved me down. 'It 's me that speaks here,' he said curtly; and we waited the

coming of the lawyer in a triple silence. He appeared at last, the maid ushering him in—a spectacled, dry, but not ungenial-looking man.

'Here, Gregg,' cried my grandfather, 'just a question: What has Aadam got to do with my will?'

'I'm afraid I don't quite understand,' said the lawyer, staring.

'What has he got to do with it?' repeated the old man, smiting with his fist upon the arm of his chair. 'Is my money mine's, or is it Aadam's? Can Aadam interfere?'

'O, I see,' said Mr. Gregg. 'Certainly not. On the marriage of both of your children a certain sum was paid down and accepted in full of legitim. You have surely not forgotten the circumstance, Mr. Loudon?'

'So that, if I like,' concluded my grandfather, hammering out his words, 'I can leave every doit I die possessed of to the Great Magunn?'—meaning probably the Great Mogul.

'No doubt of it,' replied Gregg, with a shadow of a smile.

'Ye hear that, Aadam?' asked my grandfather.

'I may be allowed to say I had no need to hear it,' said my uncle.

'Very well,' says my grandfather. 'You and Jeannie's yin can go for a bit walk. Me and Gregg has business.'

When once I was in the hall alone with Uncle Adam, I turned to him, sick at heart. 'Uncle Adam,'

I said, 'you can understand, better than I can say, how very painful all this is to me.'

'Yes, I am sorry you have seen your grandfather in so unamiable a light,' replied this extraordinary man. 'You shouldn't allow it to affect your mind, though. He has sterling qualities, quite an extraordinary character; and I have no fear but he means to behave handsomely to you.'

His composure was beyond my imitation: the house could not contain me, nor could I even promise to return to it: in concession to which weakness, it was agreed that I should call in about an hour at the office of the lawyer, whom (as he left the library) Uncle Adam should waylay and inform of the arrangement. I suppose there was never a more topsy-turvy situation; you would have thought it was I who had suffered some rebuff, and that iron-sided Adam was a generous conqueror who scorned to take advantage.

It was plain enough that I was to be endowed: to what extent and upon what conditions I was now left for an hour to meditate in the wide and solitary thoroughfares of the new town, taking counsel with street-corner statues of George IV. and William Pitt, improving my mind with the pictures in the window of a music-shop, and renewing my acquaintance with Edinburgh east wind. By the end of the hour I made my way to Mr. Gregg's office, where I was placed, with a few appropriate words, in possession of a cheque for two thousand pounds and a small parcel of architectural works.

'Mr. Loudon bids me add,' continued the lawyer, consulting a little sheet of notes, 'that although these volumes are very valuable to the practical builder, you must be careful not to lose originality. He tells you also not to be "hadden doun"—his own expression—by the theory of strains, and that Portland cement, properly sanded, will go a long way.'

I smiled, and remarked that I supposed it would.

'I once lived in one of my excellent client's houses,' observed the lawyer; 'and I was tempted, in that case, to think it had gone far enough.'

'Under these circumstances, sir,' said I, 'you will be rather relieved to hear that I have no intention of becoming a builder.'

At this he fairly laughed; and, the ice being broken, I was able to consult him as to my conduct. He insisted I must return to the house—at least, for luncheon, and one of my walks with Mr. Loudon. 'For the evening, I will furnish you with an excuse, if you please,' said he, 'by asking you to a bachelor dinner with myself. But the luncheon and the walk are unavoidable. He is an old man, and, I believe, really fond of you; he would naturally feel aggrieved if there were any appearance of avoiding him; and as for Mr. Adam, do you know, I think your delicacy out of place. . . . And now, Mr. Dodd, what are you to do with this money?'

Ay, there was the question. With two thousand pounds—fifty thousand francs—I might return to Paris and the arts, and be a prince and millionaire in that thrifty Latin Quarter. I think I had the grace,

with one corner of my mind, to be glad that I had sent the London letter: I know very well that with the rest and worst of me, I repented bitterly of that precipitate act. On one point, however, my whole multiplex estate of man was unanimous: the letter being gone, there was no help but I must follow. The money was accordingly divided in two unequal shares: for the first, Mr. Gregg got me a bill in the name of Dijon to meet my liabilities in Paris; for the second, as I had already cash in hand for the expenses of my journey, he supplied me with drafts on San Francisco.

The rest of my business in Edinburgh, not to dwell on a very agreeable dinner with the lawyer or the horrors of the family luncheon, took the form of an excursion with the stonemason, who led me this time to no suburb or work of his old hands, but, with an impulse both natural and pretty, to that more enduring home which he had chosen for his clay. It was in a cemetery, by some strange chance immured within the bulwarks of a prison; standing, besides, on the margin of a cliff, crowded with elderly stone memorials, and green with turf and ivy. The east wind (which I thought too harsh for the old man) continually shook the boughs, and the thin sun of a Scottish summer drew their dancing shadows.

'I wanted ye to see the place,' said he. 'Yon's the stane. *Euphemia Ross:* that was my goodwife, your grandmither—hoots! I'm wrong; that was my first yin; I had no bairns by her;—yours is the second, *Mary Murray, Born* 1819, *Died* 1850;

that 's her—a fine, plain, decent sort of a creature, tak' her a'thegether. *Alexander Loudon, Born Seventeen Ninety-Twa, Died*—and then a hole in the ballant: that 's me. Alexander 's my name. They ca'd me Ecky when I was a boy. Eh, Ecky! ye 're an awfu' auld man!'

I had a second and sadder experience of graveyards at my next alighting-place, the city of Muskegon, now rendered conspicuous by the dome of the new capitol encaged in scaffolding. It was late in the afternoon when I arrived, and raining; and as I walked in great streets, of the very name of which I was quite ignorant—double, treble, and quadruple lines of horse-cars jingling by—hundred-fold wires of telegraph and telephone matting heaven above my head—huge, staring houses, garish and gloomy, flanking me from either hand—the thought of the Rue Racine, ay, and of the cabman's eating-house, brought tears to my eyes. The whole monotonous Babel had grown—or, I should rather say, swelled—with such a leap since my departure that I must continually inquire my way; and the very cemetery was brand-new. Death, however, had been active; the graves were already numerous, and I must pick my way in the rain among the tawdry sepulchres of millionaires, and past the plain black crosses of Hungarian labourers, till chance or instinct led me to the place that was my father's. The stone had been erected (I knew already) 'by admiring friends'; I could now judge their taste in monuments. Their taste in literature, methought, I could imagine, and

I refrained from drawing near enough to read the terms of the inscription. But the name was in larger letters and stared at me—*James K. Dodd.* 'What a singular thing is a name!' I thought; 'how it clings to a man, and continually misrepresents, and then survives him!' And it flashed across my mind, with a mixture of regret and bitter mirth, that I had never known, and now probably never should know, what the *K* had represented. King, Kilter, Kay, Kaiser, I went, running over names at random, and then stumbled, with ludicrous misspelling, on Kornelius, and had nearly laughed aloud. I have never been more childish; I suppose (although the deeper voices of my nature seemed all dumb) because I have never been more moved. And at this last incongruous antic of my nerves I was seized with a panic of remorse, and fled the cemetery.

Scarce less funereal was the rest of my experience in Muskegon, where, nevertheless, I lingered, visiting my father's circle, for some days. It was in piety to him I lingered; and I might have spared myself the pain. His memory was already quite gone out. For his sake, indeed, I was made welcome; and for mine the conversation rolled a while with laborious effort on the virtues of the deceased. His former comrades dwelt, in my company, upon his business talents or his generosity for public purposes: when my back was turned, they remembered him no more. My father had loved me; I had left him alone, to live and die among the indifferent; now I returned to find him dead and buried and forgotten. Unavailing

penitence translated itself in my thoughts to fresh resolve. There was another poor soul who loved me —Pinkerton. I must not be guilty twice of the same error.

A week perhaps had been thus wasted, nor had I prepared my friend for the delay. Accordingly, when I had changed trains at Council Bluffs, I was aware of a man appearing at the end of the car with a telegram in his hand and inquiring whether there were any one aboard 'of the name of *London* Dodd'? I thought the name near enough, claimed the despatch, and found it was from Pinkerton: 'What day do you arrive? Awfully important.' I sent him an answer, giving day and hour, and at Ogden found a fresh despatch awaiting me: 'That will do. Unspeakable relief. Meet you at Sacramento.' In Paris days I had a private name for Pinkerton: 'The Irrepressible' was what I had called him in hours of bitterness, and the name rose once more on my lips. What mischief was he up to now? What new bowl was my benignant monster brewing for his Frankenstein? In what new imbroglio should I alight on the Pacific coast? My trust in the man was entire, and my distrust perfect. I knew he would never mean amiss; but I was convinced he would almost never (in my sense) do aright.

I suppose these vague anticipations added a shade of gloom to that already gloomy place of travel: Nebraska, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, scowled in my face at least, and seemed to point me back again to that other native land of mine, the Latin Quarter.

But when the Sierras had been climbed, and the train, after so long beating and panting, stretched itself upon the downward track—when I beheld that vast extent of prosperous country rolling seaward from the woods and the blue mountains, that illimitable spread of rippling corn, the trees growing and blowing in the merry weather, the country boys thronging aboard the train with figs and peaches, and the conductors, and the very darky stewards, visibly exulting in the change—up went my soul like a balloon; Care fell from his perch upon my shoulders; and when I spied my Pinkerton among the crowd at Sacramento, I thought of nothing but to shout and wave for him, and grasp him by the hand, like what he was—my dearest friend.

'O, Loudon!' he cried; 'man, how I've pined for you! And you haven't come an hour too soon. You're known here and waited for; I've been booming you already: you're billed for a lecture to-morrow night: "Student Life in Paris, Grave and Gay": twelve hundred places booked at the last stock! Tut, man, you're looking thin! Here, try a drop of this.' And he produced a case bottle, staringly labelled PINKERTON'S THIRTEEN STAR GOLDEN STATE BRANDY, WARRANTED ENTIRE.

'God bless me!' said I, gasping and winking after my first plunge into this fiery fluid; 'and what does "Warranted Entire" mean?'

'Why, Loudon, you ought to know that!' cried Pinkerton. 'It's real, copper-bottomed English; you see it on all the old-time wayside hostelries over there.'

'But if I'm not mistaken, it means something Warranted Entirely different,' said I, 'and applies to the public-house, and not the beverages sold.'

'It's very possible,' said Jim, quite unabashed. 'It's effective, anyway; and I can tell you, sir, it has boomed that spirit: it goes now by the gross of cases. By the way, I hope you won't mind; I've got your portrait all over San Francisco for the lecture, enlarged from that carte de visite: "H. Loudon Dodd, the Americo-Parisienne Sculptor." Here's a proof of the small handbills; the posters are the same, only in red and blue, and the letters fourteen by one.'

I looked at the handbill, and my head turned. What was the use of words? why seek to explain to Pinkerton the knotted horrors of 'Americo-Parisienne'? He took an early occasion to point it out as 'rather a good phrase; gives the two sides at a glance: I wanted the lecture written up to that.' Even after we had reached San Francisco, and at the actual physical shock of my own effigy placarded on the streets I had broken forth in petulant words, he never comprehended in the least the ground of my aversion.

'If I had only known you disliked red lettering!' was as high as he could rise. 'You are perfectly right: a clear-cut black is preferable, and shows a great deal further. The only thing that pains me is the portrait: I own I thought that a success. I'm dreadfully and truly sorry, my dear fellow: I see now it's not what you had a right to expect; but

I did it, Loudon, for the best; and the press is all delighted.'

At the moment, sweeping through green tule swamps, I fell direct on the essential. 'But, Pinkerton,' I cried, 'this lecture is the maddest of your madnesses. How can I prepare a lecture in thirty hours?'

'All done, Loudon!' he exclaimed in triumph. 'All ready. Trust me to pull a piece of business through. You 'll find it all type-written in my desk at home. I put the best talent of San Francisco on the job: Harry Miller, the brightest pressman in the city.'

And so he rattled on, beyond reach of my modest protestations, blurting out his complicated interests, crying up his new acquaintances, and ever and again hungering to introduce me to some 'whole-souled, grand fellow, as sharp as a needle,' from whom, and the very thought of whom, my spirit shrank instinctively.

Well, I was in for it—in for Pinkerton, in for the portrait, in for the type-written lecture. One promise I extorted—that I was never again to be committed in ignorance. Even for that, when I saw how its extortion puzzled and depressed the Irrepressible, my soul repented me, and in all else I suffered myself to be led uncomplaining at his chariot-wheels. The Irrepressible, did I say? The Irresistible were nigher truth.

But the time to have seen me was when I sat down to Harry Miller's lecture. He was a facetious

dog, this Harry Miller. He had a gallant way of skirting the indecent, which in my case produced physical nausea, and he could be sentimental and even melodramatic about grisettes and starving genius. I found he had enjoyed the benefit of my correspondence with Pinkerton ; adventures of my own were here and there horridly misrepresented, sentiments of my own echoed and exaggerated till I blushed to recognise them. I will do Harry Miller justice: he must have had a kind of talent, almost of genius; all attempts to lower his tone proving fruitless, and the Harry-Millerism ineradicable. Nay, the monster had a certain key of style, or want of style, so that certain milder passages, which I sought to introduce, discorded horribly and impoverished, if that were possible, the general effect.

By an early hour of the numbered evening I might have been observed at the sign of 'The Poodle Dog' dining with my agent—so Pinkerton delighted to describe himself. Thence, like an ox to the slaughter, he led me to the hall, where I stood presently alone, confronting assembled San Francisco, with no better allies than a table, a glass of water, and a mass of manuscript and typework, representing Harry Miller and myself. I read the lecture; for I had lacked both time and will to get the trash by heart—read it hurriedly, humbly, and with visible shame. Now and then I would catch in the auditorium an eye of some intelligence, now and then in the manuscript would stumble on a richer vein of Harry Miller, and my heart would fail

me, and I gabbled. The audience yawned, it stirred uneasily, it muttered, grumbled, and broke forth at last in articulate cries of 'Speak up!' and 'Nobody can hear!' I took to skipping, and, being extremely ill-acquainted with the country, almost invariably cut in again in the unintelligible midst of some new topic. What struck me as extremely ominous, these misfortunes were allowed to pass without a laugh. Indeed, I was beginning to fear the worst, and even personal indignity, when all at once the humour of the thing broke upon me strongly. I could have laughed aloud, and, being again summoned to speak up, I faced my patrons for the first time with a smile. 'Very well,' I said, 'I will try, though I don't suppose anybody wants to hear, and I can't see why anybody should.' Audience and lecturer laughed together till the tears ran down, vociferous and repeated applause hailed my impromptu sally. Another hit which I made but a little after, as I turned three pages of the copy—'You see, I am leaving out as much as I possibly can'—increased the esteem with which my patrons had begun to regard me; and when I left the stage at last, my departing form was cheered with laughter, stamping, shouting, and the waving of hats.

Pinkerton was in the waiting-room, feverishly jotting in his pocket-book. As he saw me enter, he sprang up, and I declare the tears were trickling on his cheeks.

'My dear boy,' he cried, 'I can never forgive myself, and you can never forgive me. Never mind,

I did it for the best. And how nobly you clung on! I dreaded we should have had to return the money at the doors.'

'It would have been more honest if we had,' said I.

The pressmen followed me, Harry Miller in the front ranks; and I was amazed to find them, on the whole, a pleasant set of lads, probably more sinned against than sinning, and even Harry Miller apparently a gentleman. I had in oysters and champagne—for the receipts were excellent—and, being in a high state of nervous tension, kept the table in a roar. Indeed, I was never in my life so well inspired as when I described my vigil over Harry Miller's literature or the series of my emotions as I faced the audience. The lads vowed I was the soul of good company and the prince of lecturers; and—so wonderful an institution is the popular press—if you had seen the notices next day in all the papers you must have supposed my evening's entertainment an unqualified success.

I was in excellent spirits when I returned home that night, but the miserable Pinkerton sorrowed for us both.

'O, Loudon,' he said, 'I shall never forgive myself. When I saw you didn't catch on to the idea of the lecture, I should have given it myself!'

CHAPTER VII

IRONS IN THE FIRE

Opes Strepitumque

THE food of the body differs not so greatly for the fool or the sage, the elephant or the cock-sparrow; and similar chemical elements, variously disguised, support all mortals. A brief study of Pinkerton in his new setting convinced me of a kindred truth about that other and mental digestion by which we extract what is called 'fun for our money' out of life. In the same spirit as a schoolboy deep in Mayne Reid handles a dummy gun and crawls among imaginary forests, Pinkerton sped through Kearney Street upon his daily business, representing to himself a highly-coloured part in life's performance, and happy for hours if he should have chanced to brush against a millionaire. Reality was his romance; he gloried to be thus engaged: he wallowed in his business. Suppose a man to dig up a galleon on the Coromandel coast, his rakish schooner keeping the while an offing under easy sail, and he, by the blaze of a great fire of wreckwood,

to measure ingots by the bucketful on the uproarious beach; such an one might realise a greater material spoil; he should have no more profit of romance than Pinkerton when he cast up his weekly balance-sheet in a bald office. Every dollar gained was like something brought ashore from a mysterious deep; every venture made was like a diver's plunge; and as he thrust his bold hand into the plexus of the money-market he was delightedly aware of how he shook the pillars of existence, turned out men, as at a battle-cry, to labour in far countries, and set the gold twitching in the drawers of millionaires.

I could never fathom the full extent of his speculations; but there were five separate businesses which he avowed and carried like a banner. The *Thirteen Star Golden State Brandy, Warranted Entire* (a very flagrant distillation) filled a great part of his thoughts, and was kept before the public in an eloquent but misleading treatise, 'Why Drink French Brandy? A Word to the Wise.' He kept an office for advertisers, counselling, designing, acting as middleman with printers and bill-stickers, for the inexperienced or the uninspired: the dull haberdasher came to him for ideas, the smart theatrical agent for his local knowledge, and one and all departed with a copy of his pamphlet, 'How, When, and Where; or, The Advertiser's Vade-Mecum.' He had a tug chartered every Saturday afternoon and night, carried people outside the Heads, and provided them with lines and bait

for six hours' fishing, at the rate of five dollars a person. I am told that some of them (doubtless adroit anglers) made a profit on the transaction. Occasionally he bought wrecks and condemned vessels; these latter (I cannot tell you how) found their way to sea again under aliases, and continued to stem the waves triumphantly enough under the colours of Bolivia or Nicaragua. Lastly, there was a certain agricultural engine, glorying in a great deal of vermilion and blue paint, and filling (it appeared) a 'long-felt want,' in which his interest was something like a tenth.

This for the face or front of his concerns. 'On the outside,' as he phrased it, he was variously and mysteriously engaged. No dollar slept in his possession; rather, he kept all simultaneously flying, like a conjurer with oranges. My own earnings, when I began to have a share, he would but show me for a moment, and disperse again, like those illusive money gifts which are flashed in the eyes of childhood, only to be entombed in the missionary-box. And he would come down radiant from a weekly balance-sheet, clap me on the shoulder, declare himself a winner by Gargantuan figures, and prove destitute of a quarter for a drink.

'What on earth have you done with it?' I would ask.

'Into the mill again; all re-invested!' he would cry, with infinite delight. 'Investment' was ever his word. He could not bear what he called gambling. 'Never touch stocks, Loudon,' he would say;

'nothing but legitimate business.' And yet, Heaven knows, many an indurated gambler might have drawn back appalled at the first hint of some of Pinkerton's investments! One which I succeeded in tracking home, and instance for a specimen, was a seventh share in the charter of a certain ill-starred schooner bound for Mexico—to smuggle weapons on the one trip, and cigars upon the other. The latter end of this enterprise, involving (as it did) shipwreck, confiscation, and a lawsuit with the underwriters, was too painful to be dwelt upon at length. 'It 's proved a disappointment,' was as far as my friend would go with me in words; but I knew, from observation, that the fabric of his fortunes tottered. For the rest, it was only by accident I got wind of the transaction; for Pinkerton, after a time, was shy of introducing me to his arcana: the reason you are to hear presently.

The office which was (or should have been) the point of rest for so many evolving dollars stood in the heart of the city—a high and spacious room, with many plate-glass windows. A glazed cabinet of polished redwood offered to the eye a regiment of some two hundred bottles, conspicuously labelled. These were all charged with Pinkerton's Thirteen Star, although from across the room it would have required an expert to distinguish them from the same number of bottles of Courvoisier. I used to twit my friend with this resemblance, and propose a new edition of the pamphlet, with the title thus improved, 'Why Drink French Brandy, When We

give You the same Labels?' The doors of the cabinet revolved all day upon their hinges; and if there entered any one who was a stranger to the merits of the brand, he departed laden with a bottle. When I used to protest at this extravagance, 'My dear Loudon,' Pinkerton would cry, 'you don't seem to catch on to business principles! The prime cost of the spirit is literally nothing. I couldn't find a cheaper advertisement if I tried.' Against the side-post of the cabinet there leaned a gaudy umbrella, preserved there as a relic. It appears that when Pinkerton was about to place Thirteen Star upon the market, the rainy season was at hand. He lay dark, almost in penury, awaiting the first shower, at which, as upon a signal, the main thoroughfares became dotted with his agents, vendors of advertisements; and the whole world of San Francisco, from the business-man fleeing for the ferry-boat, to the lady waiting at the corner for her car, sheltered itself under umbrellas with this strange device: *Are you wet? Try Thirteen Star.* 'It was a mammoth boom,' said Pinkerton, with a sigh of delighted recollection. 'There wasn't another umbrella to be seen. I stood at this window, Loudon, feasting my eyes; and I declare, I felt like Vanderbilt.' And it was to this neat application of the local climate that he owed, not only much of the sale of Thirteen Star, but the whole business of his advertising agency.

The large desk (to resume our survey of the office) stood about the middle, knee-deep in stacks of hand-

bills and posters of 'Why Drink French Brandy?' and 'The Advertiser's Vade-Mecum.' It was flanked upon the one hand by two female typewriters, who rested not between the hours of nine and four, and upon the other by a model of the agricultural machine. The walls, where they were not broken by telephone-boxes and a couple of photographs—one representing the wreck of the *James L. Moody* on a bold and broken coast, the other the Saturday tug alive with amateur fishers—almost disappeared under oil-paintings gaudily framed. Many of these were relics of the Latin Quarter, and I must do Pinkerton the justice to say that none of them were bad, and some had remarkable merit. They went off slowly, but for handsome figures; and their places were progressively supplied with the work of local artists. These last it was one of my first duties to review and criticise. Some of them were villainous, yet all were saleable. I said so; and the next moment saw myself, the figure of a miserable renegade, bearing arms in the wrong camp. I was to look at pictures thenceforward, not with the eye of the artist, but the dealer; and I saw the stream widen that divided me from all I loved.

'Now, Loudon,' Pinkerton had said, the morning after the lecture,—'now, Loudon, we can go at it shoulder to shoulder. This is what I have longed for: I wanted two heads and four arms; and now I have 'em. You 'll find it 's just the same as art—all observation and imagination; only more

movement. Just wait till you begin to feel the charm!'

I might have waited long. Perhaps I lack a sense; for our whole existence seemed to me one dreary bustle, and the place we bustled in fitly to be called the Place of Yawning. I slept in a little den behind the office; Pinkerton, in the office itself, stretched on a patent sofa which sometimes collapsed, his slumbers still further menaced by an imminent clock with an alarm. Roused by this diabolical contrivance, we rose early, went forth early to breakfast, and returned by nine to what Pinkerton called work, and I distraction. Masses of letters must be opened, read, and answered; some by me at a subsidiary desk which had been introduced on the morning of my arrival; others by my bright-eyed friend, pacing the room like a caged lion as he dictated to the tinkling type-writers. Masses of wet proof had to be overhauled and scrawled upon with a blue pencil—'rustic'; 'six-inch caps'; 'bold spacing here'; or sometimes terms more fervid—as, for instance, this (which I remember Pinkerton to have spirted on the margin of an advertisement of Soothing Syrup), 'Throw this all down. Have you never printed an advertisement? I'll be round in half-an-hour.' The ledger and sale-book, besides, we had always with us. Such was the backbone of our occupation, and tolerable enough; but the far greater proportion of our time was consumed by visitors—whole-souled, grand fellows no doubt, and as sharp as a needle, but to me unfortunately not diverting.

Some were apparently half-witted, and must be talked over by the hour before they could reach the humblest decision, which they only left the office to return again (ten minutes later) and rescind. Others came with a vast show of hurry and despatch, but I observed it to be principally show. The agricultural model, for instance, which was practicable, proved a kind of fly-paper for these busybodies. I have seen them blankly turn the crank of it for five minutes at a time, simulating (to nobody's deception) business interest: 'Good thing this, Pinkerton? Sell much of it? Ha! Couldn't use it, I suppose, as a medium of advertisement for my article?'—which was perhaps toilet soap. Others (a still worse variety) carried us to neighbouring saloons to dice for cocktails and (after the cocktails were paid) for dollars on a corner of the counter. The attraction of dice for all these people was, indeed, extraordinary: at a certain club where I once dined in the character of 'my partner, Mr. Dodd,' the dice-box came on the table with the wine, an artless substitute for after-dinner wit.

Of all our visitors, I believe I preferred Emperor Norton; the very mention of whose name reminds me I am doing scanty justice to the folks of San Francisco. In what other city would a harmless madman who supposed himself emperor of the two Americas have been so fostered and encouraged? Where else would even the people of the streets have respected the poor soul's illusion? Where else would bankers and merchants have received his

visits, cashed his cheques, and submitted to his small assessments? Where else would he have been suffered to attend and address the exhibition days of schools and colleges? Where else, in God's green earth, have taken his pick of restaurants, ransacked the bill of fare, and departed scatheless? They tell me he was even an exacting patron, threatening to withdraw his custom when dissatisfied; and I can believe it, for his face wore an expression distinctly gastronomical. Pinkerton had received from this monarch a cabinet appointment; I have seen the brevet, wondering mainly at the good-nature of the printer who had executed the forms, and I think my friend was at the head either of foreign affairs or education: it mattered, indeed, nothing, the prestation being in all offices identical. It was at a comparatively early date that I saw Jim in the exercise of his public functions. His Majesty entered the office—a portly, rather flabby man, with the face of a gentleman, rendered unspeakably pathetic and absurd by the great sabre at his side and the peacock's feather in his hat.

'I have called to remind you, Mr. Pinkerton, that you are somewhat in arrear of taxes,' he said, with old-fashioned, stately courtesy.

'Well, your Majesty, what is the amount?' asked Jim; and, when the figure was named (it was generally two or three dollars), paid upon the nail and offered a bonus in the shape of Thirteen Star.

'I am always delighted to patronise native industries,' said Norton the First. 'San Francisco is

public-spirited in what concerns its emperor; and indeed, sir, of all my domains, it is my favourite city.'

'Come,' said I, when he was gone, 'I prefer that customer to the lot.'

'It's really rather a distinction,' Jim admitted. 'I think it must have been the umbrella racket that attracted him.'

We were distinguished under the rose by the notice of other and greater men. There were days when Jim wore an air of unusual capacity and resolve, spoke with more brevity, like one pressed for time, and took often on his tongue such phrases as 'Longhurst told me so this morning,' or 'I had it straight from Longhurst himself.' It was no wonder, I used to think, that Pinkerton was called to council with such Titans; for the creature's quickness and resource were beyond praise. In the early days when he consulted me without reserve, pacing the room, projecting, ciphering, extending hypothetical interests, trebling imaginary capital, his 'engine' (to renew an excellent old word) labouring full steam ahead, I could never decide whether my sense of respect or entertainment were the stronger. But these good hours were destined to curtailment.

'Yes, it's smart enough,' I once observed. 'But, Pinkerton, do you think it's honest?'

'You don't think it's honest?' he wailed. 'O dear me, that ever I should have heard such an expression on your lips.'

At sight of his distress I plagiarised unblushingly from Myner. 'You seem to think honesty as simple

as Blind Man's Buff,' said I. 'It's a more delicate affair than that: delicate as any art.'

'O well, at that rate!' he exclaimed, with complete relief; 'that's casuistry.'

'I am perfectly certain of one thing; that what you propose is dishonest,' I returned.

'Well, say no more about it; that's settled,' he replied.

Thus, almost at a word, my point was carried. But the trouble was that such differences continued to recur, until we began to regard each other with alarm. If there were one thing Pinkerton valued himself upon, it was his honesty; if there were one thing he clung to, it was my good opinion; and when both were involved, as was the case in these commercial cruces, the man was on the rack. My own position, if you consider how much I owed him, how hateful is the trade of fault-finder, and that yet I lived and fattened on these questionable operations, was perhaps equally distressing. If I had been more sterling or more combative, things might have gone extremely far. But, in truth, I was just base enough to profit by what was not forced on my attention, rather than seek scenes; Pinkerton quite cunning enough to avail himself of my weakness; and it was a relief to both when he began to involve his proceedings in a decent mystery.

Our last dispute, which had a most unlooked-for consequence, turned on the refitting of condemned ships. He had bought a miserable hulk, and came, rubbing his hands, to inform me she was already on

the slip, under a new name, to be repaired. When first I had heard of this industry I suppose I scarcely comprehended; but much discussion had sharpened my faculties, and now my brow became heavy.

'I can be no party to that, Pinkerton,' said I.

He leaped like a man shot. 'What next?' he cried. 'What ails you anyway? You seem to me to dislike everything that's profitable.'

'This ship has been condemned by Lloyd's agent,' said I.

'But I tell you it's a deal. The ship's in splendid condition; there's next to nothing wrong with her but the garboard streak and the sternpost. I tell you, Lloyd's is a ring, like everybody else; only it's an English ring, and that's what deceives you. If it was American, you would be crying it down all day. It's Anglomania—common Anglomania,' he cried, with growing irritation.

'I will not make money by risking men's lives,' was my ultimatum.

'Great Cæsar! isn't all speculation a risk? Isn't the fairest kind of shipowning to risk men's lives? And mining—how's that for risk? And look at the elevator business—there's danger if you like! Didn't I take my risk when I bought her? She might have been too far gone; and where would I have been? Loudon,' he cried, 'I tell you the truth: you're too full of refinement for this world!'

'I condemn you out of your own lips,' I replied. '"The fairest kind of shipowning," says you. If you please, let us only do the fairest kind of business.'

The shot told; the Irrepressible was silenced; and I profited by the chance to pour in a broadside of another sort. He was all sunk in money-getting, I pointed out; he never dreamed of anything but dollars. Where were all his generous, progressive sentiments? Where was his culture? I asked. And where was the American Type?

'It 's true, Loudon,' he cried, striding up and down the room, and wildly scouring at his hair. 'You 're perfectly right. I 'm becoming materialised. O, what a thing to have to say, what a confession to make! Materialised! Me! Loudon, this must go on no longer. You 've been a loyal friend to me once more; give me your hand—you 've saved me again. I must do something to rouse the spiritual side; something desperate; study something, something dry and tough. What shall it be? Theology? Algebra? What 's algebra?'

'It 's dry and tough enough,' said I; '$a^2 + 2\,ab + b^2$.'

'It 's stimulating, though?' he inquired.

I told him I believed so, and that it was considered fortifying to Types.

'Then that 's the thing for me. I 'll study algebra,' he concluded.

The next day, by application to one of his typewriting women, he got word of a young lady, one Miss Mamie McBride, who was willing and able to conduct him in these bloomless meadows; and, her circumstances being lean, and terms consequently moderate, he and Mamie were soon in agreement for two lessons in the week. He took fire with unexampled

rapidity; he seemed unable to tear himself away from the symbolic art; an hour's lesson occupied the whole evening; and the original two was soon increased to four, and then to five. I bade him beware of female blandishments. 'The first thing you know, you 'll be falling in love with the algebraist,' said I.

'Don't say it, even in jest,' he cried. 'She 's a lady I revere. I could no more lay a hand upon her than I could upon a spirit. Loudon, I don't believe God ever made a purer-minded woman.'

Which appeared to me too fervent to be reassuring.

Meanwhile I had been long expostulating with my friend upon a different matter. 'I 'm the fifth wheel,' I kept telling him. 'For any use I am, I might as well be in Senegambia. The letters you give me to attend to might be answered by a sucking child. And I tell you what it is, Pinkerton; either you 've got to find me some employment, or I 'll have to start in and find it for myself.'

This I said with a corner of my eye in the usual quarter, toward the arts, little dreaming what destiny was to provide.

'I 've got it, Loudon,' Pinkerton at last replied. 'Got the idea on the Potrero cars. Found I hadn't a pencil, borrowed one from the conductor, and figured on it roughly all the way in town. I saw it was the thing at last; gives you a real show. All your talents and accomplishments come in. Here 's a sketch advertisement. Just run your eye over it. '*Sun, Ozone and Music!* PINKERTON'S HEBDOMADARY PICNICS!' (That 's a good, catch-

ing phrase, 'hebdomadary,' though it 's hard to say. I made a note of it when I was looking in the dictionary how to spell *hectagonal.* "Well, you 're a boss word," I said. "Before you 're very much older, I 'll have you in type as long as yourself." And here it is, you see.) "*Five dollars a head, and ladies free.* MONSTER OLIO OF ATTRACTIONS." (How does that strike you?) "*Free luncheon under the greenwood tree. Dance on the elastic sward. Home again in the Bright Evening Hours. Manager and Honorary Steward, H. Loudon Dodd, Esq., the well-known connoisseur.*"'

Singular how a man runs from Scylla to Charybdis! I was so intent on securing the disappearance of a single epithet that I accepted the rest of the advertisement and all that it involved without discussion. So it befell that the words 'well-known connoisseur' were deleted; but that H. Loudon Dodd became manager and honorary steward of Pinkerton's Hebdomadary Picnics, soon shortened, by popular consent, to The Dromedary.

By eight o'clock, any Sunday morning, I was to be observed by an admiring public on the wharf. The garb and attributes of sacrifice consisted of a black frockcoat, rosetted, its pockets bulging with sweetmeats and inferior cigars, trousers of light blue, a silk hat like a reflector, and a varnished wand. A goodly steamer guarded my one flank, panting and throbbing, flags fluttering fore and aft of her, illustrative of the Dromedary and patriotism. My other flank was covered by the ticket-office, strongly held

by a trusty character of the Scots persuasion, rosetted like his superior, and smoking a cigar to mark the occasion festive. At half-past, having assured myself that all was well with the free luncheons, I lit a cigar myself, and awaited the strains of the 'Pioneer Band.' I had never to wait long—they were German and punctual—and by a few minutes after the half-hour I would hear them booming down street with a long military roll of drums, some score of gratuitous asses prancing at the head in bearskin hats and buckskin aprons, and conspicuous with resplendent axes. The band, of course, we paid for; but so strong is the San Franciscan passion for public masquerade, that the asses (as I say) were all gratuitous, pranced for the love of it, and cost us nothing but their luncheon.

The musicians formed up in the bows of my steamer, and struck into a skittish polka; the asses mounted guard upon the gangway and the ticket-office; and presently after, in family parties of father, mother, and children, in the form of duplicate lovers or in that of solitary youth, the public began to descend upon us by the carful at a time; four to six hundred perhaps, with a strong German flavour, and all merry as children. When these had been shepherded on board, and the inevitable belated two or three had gained the deck amidst the cheering of the public, the hawser was cast off, and we plunged into the bay.

And now behold the honorary steward in the hour of duty and glory; see me circulate amid the

crowd, radiating affability and laughter, liberal with my sweetmeats and cigars. I say unblushing things to hobbledehoy girls, tell shy young persons this is the married people's boat, roguishly ask the abstracted if they are thinking of their sweethearts, offer paterfamilias a cigar, am struck with the beauty and grow curious about the age of mamma's youngest, who (I assure her gaily) will be a man before his mother; or perhaps it may occur to me, from the sensible expression of her face, that she is a person of good counsel, and I ask her earnestly if she knows any particularly pleasant place on the Saucelito or San Rafael coast—for the scene of our picnic is always supposed to be uncertain. The next moment I am back at my giddy badinage with the young ladies, wakening laughter as I go, and leaving in my wake applausive comments of 'Isn't Mr. Dodd a funny gentleman?' and 'O, I think he's just too nice!'

An hour having passed in this airy manner, I start upon my rounds afresh, with a bag full of coloured tickets, all with pins attached, and all with legible inscriptions: 'Old Germany,' 'California,' 'True Love,' 'Old Fogies,' 'La Belle France,' 'Green Erin,' 'The Land of Cakes,' 'Washington,' 'Blue Jay,' 'Robin Red-Breast'—twenty of each denomination; for when it comes to the luncheon we sit down by twenties. These are distributed with anxious tact—for, indeed, this is the most delicate part of my functions—but outwardly with reckless unconcern, amidst the gayest flutter and confusion; and are immediately after sported upon hats and bonnets, to

the extreme diffusion of cordiality, total strangers hailing each other by 'the number of their mess'—so we humorously name it—and the deck ringing with cries of, 'Here, all Blue Jays to the rescue!' or, 'I say, am I alone in this blame' ship? Ain't there no more Californians?'

By this time we are drawing near to the appointed spot. I mount upon the bridge, the observed of all observers.

'Captain,' I say, in clear, emphatic tones, heard far and wide, 'the majority of the company appear to be in favour of the little cove beyond One-Tree Point.'

'All right, Mr. Dodd,' responds the captain heartily; 'all one to me. I am not exactly sure of the place you mean; but just you stay here and pilot me.'

I do, pointing with my wand. I do pilot him, to the inexpressible entertainment of the picnic, for I am (why should I deny it?) the popular man. We slow down off the mouth of a grassy valley, watered by a brook and set in pines and redwoods. The anchor is let go, the boats are lowered—two of them already packed with the materials of an impromptu bar—and the Pioneer Band, accompanied by the resplendent asses, fill the other, and move shoreward to the inviting strains of 'Buffalo Gals, won't you come out to-night?' It is a part of our programme that one of the asses shall, from sheer clumsiness, in the course of this embarkation, drop a dummy axe into the water, whereupon the mirth of the picnic can hardly be assuaged. Upon one occasion the

dummy axe floated, and the laugh turned rather the wrong way.

In from ten to twenty minutes the boats are alongside again, the messes are marshalled separately on the deck, and the picnic goes ashore, to find the band and the impromptu bar awaiting them. Then come the hampers, which are piled up on the beach, and surrounded by a stern guard of stalwart asses, axe on shoulder. It is here I take my place, notebook in hand, under a banner bearing the legend, 'Come here for hampers.' Each hamper contains a complete outfit for a separate twenty—cold provender, plates, glasses, knives, forks, and spoons. An agonised printed appeal from the fevered pen of Pinkerton, pasted on the inside of the lid, beseeches that care be taken of the glass and silver. Beer, wine, and lemonade are flowing already from the bar, and the various clans of twenty file away into the woods, with bottles under their arms and the hampers strung upon a stick. Till one they feast there, in a very moderate seclusion, all being within earshot of the band. From one till four dancing takes place upon the grass; the bar does a roaring business; and the honorary steward, who has already exhausted himself to bring life into the dullest of the messes, must now indefatigably dance with the plainest of the women. At four a bugle-call is sounded, and by half-past behold us on board again —Pioneers, corrugated iron bar, empty bottles, and all; while the honorary steward, free at last, subsides into the captain's cabin over a brandy and soda

and a book. Free at last, I say; yet there remains before him the frantic leavetakings at the pier, and a sober journey up to Pinkerton's office with two policemen and the day's takings in a bag.

What I have here sketched was the routine. But we appealed to the taste of San Francisco more distinctly in particular fêtes. 'Ye Olde Time Pycke-Nycke,' largely advertised in hand-bills beginning 'Oyez, Oyez!' and largely frequented by knights, monks, and cavaliers, was drowned out by unseasonable rain, and returned to the city one of the saddest spectacles I ever remember to have witnessed. In pleasing contrast, and certainly our chief success, was 'The Gathering of the Clans,' or Scottish picnic. So many milk-white knees were never before simultaneously exhibited in public, and, to judge by the prevalence of 'Royal Stewart' and the number of eagles' feathers, we were a high-born company. I threw forward the Scottish flank of my own ancestry, and passed muster as a clansman with applause. There was, indeed, but one small cloud on this red-letter day. I had laid in a large supply of the national beverage in the shape of the 'Rob Roy MacGregor O' Blend, Warranted Old and Vatted'; and this must certainly have been a generous spirit, for I had some anxious work between four and half-past, conveying on board the inanimate forms of chieftains.

To one of our ordinary festivities, where he was the life and soul of his own mess, Pinkerton himself came incognito, bringing the algebraist on his arm.

Miss Mamie proved to be a well-enough-looking mouse, with a large limpid eye, very good manners, and a flow of the most correct expressions I have ever heard upon the human lip. As Pinkerton's incognito was strict, I had little opportunity to cultivate the lady's acquaintance, but I was informed afterwards that she considered me 'the wittiest gentleman she had ever met.' 'The Lord mend your taste in wit!' thought I; but I cannot conceal that such was the general impression. One of my pleasantries even went the round of San Francisco, and I have heard it (myself all unknown) bandied in saloons. To be unknown began at last to be a rare experience; a bustle woke upon my passage, above all, in humble neighbourhoods. 'Who's that?' one would ask, and the other would cry, 'That! why, Dromedary Dodd!' or, with withering scorn, 'Not know Mr. Dodd of the picnics? Well!' and, indeed, I think it marked a rather barren destiny; for our picnics, if a trifle vulgar, were as gay and innocent as the age of gold. I am sure no people divert themselves so easily and so well, and even with the cares of my stewardship I was often happy to be there.

Indeed, there were but two drawbacks in the least considerable. The first was my terror of the hobbledehoy girls, to whom (from the demands of my situation) I was obliged to lay myself so open. The other, if less momentous, was more mortifying. In early days—at my mother's knee, as a man may say—I had acquired the unenviable accomplishment

(which I have never since been able to lose) of singing 'Just before the Battle.' I have what the French call a fillet of voice—my best notes scarce audible about a dinner-table, and the upper register rather to be regarded as a higher power of silence. Experts tell me, besides, that I sing flat; nor, if I were the best singer in the world, does 'Just before the Battle' occur to my mature taste as the song that I would choose to sing. In spite of all which considerations, at one picnic, memorably dull, and after I had exhausted every other art of pleasing, I gave, in desperation, my one song. From that hour my doom was gone forth. Either we had a chronic passenger (though I could never detect him), or the very wood and iron of the steamer must have retained the tradition. At every successive picnic word went round that Mr. Dodd was a singer; that Mr. Dodd sang 'Just before the Battle'; and, finally, that now was the time when Mr. Dodd sang 'Just before the Battle.' So that the thing became a fixture, like the dropping of the dummy axe; and you are to conceive me, Sunday after Sunday, piping up my lamentable ditty, and covered, when it was done, with gratuitous applause. It is a beautiful trait in human nature that I was invariably offered an encore.

I was well paid, however, even to sing. Pinkerton and I, after an average Sunday, had five hundred dollars to divide. Nay, and the picnics were the means, although indirectly, of bringing me a singular windfall. This was at the end of the season, after the 'Grand Farewell Fancy Dress Gala.' Many of

the hampers had suffered severely; and it was judged wiser to save storage, dispose of them, and lay in a fresh stock when the campaign reopened. Among my purchasers was a working man of the name of Speedy, to whose house, after several unavailing letters, I must proceed in person, wondering to find myself once again on the wrong side, and playing the creditor to some one else's debtor. Speedy was in the belligerent stage of fear. He could not pay. It appeared he had already resold the hampers, and he defied me to do my worst. I did not like to lose my own money; I hated to lose Pinkerton's; and the bearing of my creditor incensed me.

'Do you know, Mr. Speedy, that I can send you to the penitentiary?' said I, willing to read him a lesson.

The dire expression was overheard in the next room. A large, fresh, motherly Irishwoman ran forth upon the instant, and fell to besiege me with caresses and appeals. 'Sure now, and ye couldn't have the heart to ut, Mr. Dodd—you, that 's so well known to be a pleasant gentleman; and it 's a pleasant face ye have, and the picture of me own brother that 's dead and gone. It 's a truth that he 's been drinking. Ye can smell it off of him, more blame to him. But, indade, and there 's nothing in the house beyont the furnicher, and Thim Stock. It 's the stock that ye 'll be taking, dear. A sore penny it has cost me, first and last, and, by all tales, not worth an owld tobacco-pipe.' Thus adjured, and somewhat embarrassed by the stern attitude I had adopted, I suffered myself

to be invested with a considerable quantity of what is called 'wild-cat stock,' in which this excellent if illogical female had been squandering her hard-earned gold. It could scarce be said to better my position, but the step quieted the woman; and, on the other hand, I could not think I was taking much risk, for the shares in question (they were those of what I will call the Catamount Silver Mine) had fallen some time before to the bed-rock quotation, and now lay perfectly inert, or were only kicked (like other waste-paper) about the kennel of the exchange by bankrupt speculators.

A month or two after I perceived by the stock-list that Catamount had taken a bound; before afternoon 'thim stock' were worth a quite considerable pot of money; and I learned, upon inquiry, that a bonanza had been found in a condemned lead, and the mine was now expected to do wonders. Remarkable to philosophers how bonanzas are found in condemned leads, and how the stock is always at freezing-point immediately before! By some stroke of chance the Speedys had held on to the right thing; they had escaped the syndicate; yet a little more, if I had not come to dun them, and Mrs. Speedy would have been buying a silk dress. I could not bear, of course, to profit by the accident, and returned to offer restitution. The house was in a bustle; the neighbours (all stock-gamblers themselves) had crowded to condole; and Mrs. Speedy sat with streaming tears, the centre of a sympathetic group. 'For fifteen year I 've been at ut,' she was

lamenting as I entered, 'and grudging the babes the very milk—more shame to me!—to pay their dhirty assessments. And now, my dears, I should be a lady, and driving in my coach, if all had their rights; and a sorrow on that man Dodd! As soon as I set eyes on him, I seen the divil was in the house.'

It was upon these words that I made my entrance, which was therefore dramatic enough, though nothing to what followed. For when it appeared that I was come to restore the lost fortune, and when Mrs. Speedy (after copiously weeping on my bosom) had refused the restitution, and when Mr. Speedy (summoned to that end from a camp of the Grand Army of the Republic) had added his refusal, and when I had insisted, and they had insisted, and the neighbours had applauded and supported each of us in turn; and when at last it was agreed we were to hold the stock together, and share the proceeds in three parts—one for me, one for Mr. Speedy, and one for his spouse—I will leave you to conceive the enthusiasm that reigned in that small, bare apartment, with the sewing-machine in the one corner, and the babes asleep in the other, and pictures of Garfield and the Battle of Gettysburg on the yellow walls. Port-wine was had in by a sympathiser, and we drank it mingled with tears.

'And I dhrink to your health, my dear,' sobbed Mrs. Speedy, especially affected by my gallantry in the matter of the third share; 'and I 'm sure we all dhrink to his health—Mr. Dodd of the picnics, no gentleman better known than him; and it 's my

prayer, dear, the good God may be long spared to see ye in health and happiness!'

In the end I was the chief gainer; for I sold my third while it was worth five thousand dollars, but the Speedys more adventurously held on until the syndicate reversed the process, when they were happy to escape with perhaps a quarter of that sum. It was just as well; for the bulk of the money was (in Pinkerton's phrase) reinvested; and when next I saw Mrs. Speedy, she was still gorgeously dressed from the proceeds of the late success, but was already moist with tears over the new catastrophe. 'We're froze out, me darlin'! All the money we had, dear, and the sewing-machine, and Jim's uniform, was in the Golden West; and the vipers has put on a new assessment.'

By the end of the year, therefore, this is how I stood. I had made

By Catamount Silver Mine	$5,000
By the picnics	3,000
By the lecture	600
By profit and loss on capital in Pinkerton's business	1,350
	$9,950

to which must be added

What remained of my grandfather's donation .	8,500
	$18,450

It appears, on the other hand, that

I had spent	4,000
Which thus left me to the good . . .	$14,450

a result on which I am not ashamed to say I looked with gratitude and pride. Some eight thousand (being late conquest) was liquid and actually tractile in the bank; the rest whirled beyond reach and even sight (save in the mirror of a balance-sheet) under the compelling spell of wizard Pinkerton. Dollars of mine were tacking off the shores of Mexico, in peril of the deep and the guarda-costas; they rang on saloon counters in the city of Tombstone, Arizona; they shone in faro-tents among the mountain diggings; the imagination flagged in following them, so wide were they diffused, so briskly they span to the turning of the wizard's crank. But here, there, or everywhere I could still tell myself it was all mine, and—what was more convincing—draw substantial dividends. My fortune, I called it; and it represented, when expressed in dollars, or even British pounds, an honest pot of money; when extended into francs, a veritable fortune. Perhaps I have let the cat out of the bag; perhaps you see already where my hopes were pointing, and begin to blame my inconsistency. But I must first tell you my excuse, and the change that had befallen Pinkerton.

About a week after the picnic to which he escorted Mamie, Pinkerton avowed the state of his affections. From what I had observed on board the steamer—where, methought, Mamie waited on him with her limpid eyes—I encouraged the bashful lover to proceed; and the very next evening he was carrying me to call on his affianced.

'You must befriend her, Loudon, as you have always befriended me,' he said pathetically.

'By saying disagreeable things? I doubt if that be the way to a young lady's favour,' I replied; 'and since this picnicking I begin to be a man of some experience.'

'Yes, you do nobly there; I can't describe how I admire you,' he cried. 'Not that she will ever need it; she has had every advantage. God knows what I have done to deserve her. O man, what a responsibility this is for a rough fellow and not always truthful!'

'Brace up, old man—brace up!' said I.

But when we reached Mamie's boarding-house, it was almost with tears that he presented me. 'Here is Loudon, Mamie,' were his words. 'I want you to love him; he has a grand nature.'

'You are certainly no stranger to me, Mr. Dodd,' was her gracious expression. 'James is never weary of descanting on your goodness.'

'My dear lady,' said I, 'when you know our friend a little better, you will make a large allowance for his warm heart. My goodness has consisted in allowing him to feed and clothe and toil for me when he could ill afford it. If I am now alive, it is to him I owe it; no man had a kinder friend. You must take good care of him,' I added, laying my hand on his shoulder, 'and keep him in good order, for he needs it.'

Pinkerton was much affected by this speech, and so, I fear, was Mamie. I admit it was a tactless

performance. 'When you know our friend a little better,' was not happily said; and even 'keep him in good order, for he needs it,' might be construed into matter of offence. But I lay it before you in all confidence of your acquittal: was the general tone of it 'patronising'? Even if such was the verdict of the lady, I cannot but suppose the blame was neither wholly hers nor wholly mine; I cannot but suppose that Pinkerton had already sickened the poor woman of my very name; so that if I had come with the songs of Apollo, she must still have been disgusted.

Here, however, were two finger-posts to Paris—Jim was going to be married, and so had the less need of my society; I had not pleased his bride, and so was, perhaps, better absent. Late one evening I broached the idea to my friend. It had been a great day for me; I had just banked my five thousand Catamountain dollars; and as Jim had refused to lay a finger on the stock, risk and profit were both wholly mine, and I was celebrating the event with stout and crackers. I began by telling him that if it caused him any pain or any anxiety about his affairs, he had but to say the word, and he should hear no more of my proposal. He was the truest and best friend I ever had, or was ever like to have; and it would be a strange thing if I refused him any favour he was sure he wanted. At the same time I wished him to be sure; for my life was wasting in my hands. I was like one from home: all my true interests summoned me away. I

must remind him, besides, that he was now about to marry and assume new interests, and that our extreme familiarity might be even painful to his wife. 'O no, Loudon; I feel you are wrong there,' he interjected warmly; 'she *does* appreciate your nature.' 'So much the better, then,' I continued; and went on to point out that our separation need not be for long; that, in the way affairs were going, he might join me in two years with a fortune—small, indeed, for the States, but in France almost conspicuous; that we might unite our resources, and have one house in Paris for the winter and a second near Fontainebleau for summer, where we could be as happy as the day was long, and bring up little Pinkertons as practical artistic workmen, far from the money-hunger of the West. 'Let me go, then,' I concluded; 'not as a deserter, but as the vanguard, to lead the march of the Pinkerton men.'

So I argued and pleaded, not without emotion; my friend sitting opposite, resting his chin upon his hand and (but for that single interjection) silent. 'I have been looking for this, Loudon,' said he, when I had done. 'It does pain me, and that's the fact—I'm so miserably selfish. And I believe it's a death-blow to the picnics; for it's idle to deny that you were the heart and soul of them with your wand and your gallant bearing, and wit and humour and chivalry, and throwing that kind of society atmosphere about the thing. But, for all that, you're right, and you ought to go. You may count on forty dollars a week; and if Depew City—one of

nature's centres for this State—pan out the least as I expect, it may be double. But it 's forty dollars anyway ; and to think that two years ago you were almost reduced to beggary ! '

' I *was* reduced to it,' said I.

' Well, the brutes gave you nothing, and I 'm glad of it now ! ' cried Jim. ' It 's the triumphant return I glory in ! Think of the master, and that cold-blooded Myner too ! Yes, just let the Depew City boom get on its legs, and you shall go ; and two years later, day for day, I 'll shake hands with you in Paris, with Mamie on my arm, God bless her ! '

We talked in this vein far into the night. I was myself so exultant in my new-found liberty, and Pinkerton so proud of my triumph, so happy in my happiness, in so warm a glow about the gallant little woman of his choice, and the very room so filled with castles in the air and cottages at Fontainebleau, that it was little wonder if sleep fled our eyelids, and three had followed two upon the office-clock before Pinkerton unfolded the mechanism of his patent sofa.

CHAPTER VIII

FACES ON THE CITY FRONT

It is very much the custom to view life as if it were exactly ruled in two, like sleep and waking—the provinces of play and business standing separate. The business side of my career in San Francisco has been now disposed of; I approach the chapter of diversion; and it will be found they had about an equal share in building up the story of the Wrecker —a gentleman whose appearance may be presently expected.

With all my occupations, some six afternoons and two or three odd evenings remained at my disposal every week: a circumstance the more agreeable as I was a stranger in a city singularly picturesque. From what I had once called myself, 'The Amateur Parisian,' I grew (or declined) into a water-side prowler, a lingerer on wharves, a frequenter of shy neighbourhoods, a scraper of acquaintance with eccentric characters. I visited Chinese and Mexican gambling-hells, German secret societies, sailors' boarding-houses, and 'dives' of every complexion

of the disreputable and dangerous. I have seen greasy Mexican hands pinned to the table with a knife for cheating, seamen (when blood-money ran high) knocked down upon the public street and carried insensible on board short-handed ships, shots exchanged, and the smoke (and the company) dispersing from the doors of the saloon. I have heard cold-minded Polacks debate upon the readiest method of burning San Francisco to the ground, hot-headed working men and women bawl and swear in the tribune at the Sandlot, and Kearney himself open his subscription for a gallows, name the manufacturers who were to grace it with their dangling bodies, and read aloud to the delighted multitude a telegram of adhesion from a member of the State legislature: all which preparations of proletarian war were (in a moment) breathed upon and abolished by the mere name and fame of Mr. Coleman. That lion of the Vigilantes had but to rouse himself and shake his ears, and the whole brawling mob was silenced. I could not but reflect what a strange manner of man this was, to be living unremarked there as a private merchant, and to be so feared by a whole city; and if I was disappointed, in my character of looker-on, to have the matter end ingloriously without the firing of a shot or the hanging of a single millionaire, philosophy tried to tell me that this sight was truly the more picturesque. In a thousand towns and different epochs I might have had occasion to behold the cowardice and carnage of street-fighting; where else, but only there and then,

could I have enjoyed a view of Coleman (the intermittent despot) walking meditatively up hill in a quiet part of town, with a very rolling gait, and slapping gently his great thigh?

Minora canamus. This historic figure stalks silently through a corner of the San Francisco of my memory. The rest is bric-à-brac, the reminiscences of a vagrant sketcher. My delight was much in slums. 'Little Italy' was a haunt of mine. There I would look in at the windows of small eating-shops transported bodily from Genoa or Naples, with their macaroni, and chianti flasks, and portraits of Garibaldi, and coloured political caricatures; or (entering in) hold high debate with some ear-ringed fisher of the bay as to the designs of 'Mr. Owstria' and 'Mr. Rooshia.' I was often to be observed (had there been any to observe me) in that dis-peopled, hill-side solitude of 'Little Mexico,' with its crazy wooden houses, endless crazy wooden stairs, and perilous mountain-goat paths in the sand. China-town by a thousand eccentricities drew and held me; I could never have enough of its ambiguous, inter-racial atmosphere, as of a vitalised museum; never wonder enough at its outlandish, necromantic-looking vegetables set forth to sell in commonplace American shop-windows, its temple-doors open and the scent of the joss-stick streaming forth on the American air, its kites of Oriental fashion hanging fouled in Western telegraph-wires, its flights of paper prayers which the trade-wind hunts and dissipates along

Western gutters. I was a frequent wanderer on North Beach, gazing at the straits, and the huge Cape Horners creeping out to sea, and imminent Tamalpais. Thence, on my homeward way, I might visit that strange and filthy shed, earth-paved and walled with the cages of wild animals and birds, where at a ramshackle counter, amid the yells of monkeys and a poignant atmosphere of menagerie, forty-rod whisky was administered by a proprietor as dirty as his beasts. Nor did I even neglect Nob Hill, which is itself a kind of slum, being the habitat of the mere millionaire. There they dwell upon the hill-top, high raised above man's clamour, and the trade-wind blows between their palaces about deserted streets.

But San Francisco is not herself only. She is not only the most interesting city in the Union, and the hugest smelting-pot of races and the precious metals. She keeps, besides, the doors of the Pacific, and is the port of entry to another world and an earlier epoch in man's history. Nowhere else shall you observe (in the ancient phrase) so many tall ships as here convene from round the Horn, from China, from Sydney, and the Indies. But, scarce remarked amid that crowd of deep-sea giants, another class of craft, the Island schooner, circulates—low in the water, with lofty spars and dainty lines, rigged and fashioned like a yacht, manned with brown-skinned, soft-spoken, sweet-eyed native sailors, and equipped with their great double-ender boats that tell a tale of boisterous sea-beaches. These steal out and in

again, unnoted by the world or even the newspaper press, save for the line in the clearing column, 'Schooner So-and-so for Yap and South Sea Islands' —steal out with nondescript cargoes of tinned salmon, gin, bolts of gaudy cotton stuff, women's hats, and Waterbury watches, to return, after a year, piled as high as to the eaves of the house with copra, or wallowing deep with the shells of the tortoise or the pearl oyster. To me, in my character of the Amateur Parisian, this island traffic, and even the island world, were beyond the bounds of curiosity, and how much more of knowledge? I stood there on the extreme shore of the West and of to-day. Seventeen hundred years ago, and seven thousand miles to the east, a legionary stood, perhaps, upon the wall of Antoninus, and looked northward toward the mountains of the Picts. For all the interval of time and space, I, when I looked from the cliff-house on the broad Pacific, was that man's heir and analogue: each of us standing on the verge of the Roman Empire (or, as we now call it, Western civilisation), each of us gazing onward into zones unromanised. But I was dull. I looked rather backward, keeping a kind eye on Paris; and it required a series of converging incidents to change my attitude of nonchalance for one of interest, and even longing, which I little dreamed that I should live to gratify.

The first of these incidents brought me in acquaintance with a certain San Francisco character, who had something of a name beyond the limits of

the city, and was known to many lovers of good English. I had discovered a new slum, a place of precarious sandy cliffs, deep sandy cuttings, solitary ancient houses, and the butt-ends of streets. It was already environed. The ranks of the street-lamps threaded it unbroken. The city, upon all sides of it, was tightly packed, and growled with traffic. To-day, I do not doubt the very landmarks are all swept away; but it offered then, within narrow limits, a delightful peace, and (in the morning, when I chiefly went there) a seclusion almost rural. On a steep sandhill in this neighbourhood toppled, on the most insecure foundation, a certain row of houses, each with a bit of garden, and all (I have to presume) inhabited. Thither I used to mount by a crumbling footpath, and in front of the last of the houses would sit down to sketch.

The very first day I saw I was observed out of the ground-floor window by a youngish, good-looking fellow, prematurely bald, and with an expression both lively and engaging. The second, as we were still the only figures in the landscape, it was no more than natural that we should nod. The third he came out fairly from his intrenchments, praised my sketch, and with the *impromptu* cordiality of artists carried me into his apartment; where I sat presently in the midst of a museum of strange objects—paddles, and battle-clubs, and baskets, rough-hewn stone images, ornaments of threaded shell, cocoa-nut bowls, snowy cocoa-nut plumes—evidences and examples of another earth, another climate, another

race, and another (if a ruder) culture. Nor did these objects lack a fitting commentary in the conversation of my new acquaintance. Doubtless you have read his book. You know already how he tramped and starved, and had so fine a profit of living in his days among the islands; and meeting him as I did, one artist with another, after months of offices and picnics, you can imagine with what charm he would speak, and with what pleasure I would hear. It was in such talks, which we were both eager to repeat, that I first heard the names—first fell under the spell—of the islands; and it was from one of the first of them that I returned (a happy man) with 'Omoo' under one arm, and my friend's own adventures under the other.

The second incident was more dramatic, and had, besides, a bearing on my future. I was standing one day near a boat-landing under Telegraph Hill. A large barque, perhaps of eighteen hundred tons, was coming more than usually close about the point to reach her moorings; and I was observing her with languid inattention, when I observed two men to stride across the bulwarks, drop into a shore boat, and, violently dispossessing the boatman of his oars, pull toward the landing where I stood. In a surprisingly short time they came tearing up the steps, and I could see that both were too well dressed to be foremast hands—the first even with research, and both, and specially the first, appeared under the empire of some strong emotion.

'Nearest police office!' cried the leader.

'This way,' said I, immediately falling in with their precipitate pace. 'What 's wrong? What ship is that?'

'That 's the *Gleaner*,' he replied. 'I am chief officer, this gentleman 's third, and we 've to get in our depositions before the crew. You see, they might corral us with the captain, and that 's no kind of berth for me. I 've sailed with some hard cases in my time, and seen pins flying like sand on a squally day—but never a match to our old man. It never let up from the Hook to the Farallones, and the last man was dropped not sixteen hours ago. Packet rats our men were, and as tough a crowd as ever sand-bagged a man's head in; but they looked sick enough when the captain started in with his fancy shooting.'

'O, he 's done up,' observed the other. 'He won't go to sea no more.'

'You make me tired,' retorted his superior. 'If he gets ashore in one piece, and isn't lynched in the next ten minutes, he 'll do yet. The owners have a longer memory than the public, they 'll stand by him; they don't find as smart a captain every day in the year.'

'O, he 's a son of a gun of a fine captain; there ain't no doubt of that,' concurred the other heartily. 'Why, I don't suppose there 's been no wages paid aboard that *Gleaner* for three trips.'

'No wages?' I exclaimed, for I was still a novice in maritime affairs.

'Not to sailor-men before the mast,' agreed the mate. 'Men cleared out; wasn't the soft job they

maybe took it for. She isn't the first ship that never paid wages.'

I could not but observe that our pace was progressively relaxing; and, indeed, I have often wondered since whether the hurry of the start were not intended for the gallery alone. Certain it is, at least, that when we had reached the police office, and the mates had made their deposition, and told their horrid tale of five men murdered—some with savage passion, some with cold brutality—between Sandy Hook and San Francisco, the police were despatched in time to be too late. Before we arrived the ruffian had slipped out upon the dock, and mingled with the crowd, and found a refuge in the house of an acquaintance; and the ship was only tenanted by his late victims. Well for him that he had been thus speedy; for when word began to go abroad among the shore-side characters, when the last victim was carried by to the hospital, when those who had escaped (as by miracle) from that floating shambles began to circulate and show their wounds in the crowd, it was strange to witness the agitation that seized and shook that portion of the city. Men shed tears in public; bosses of lodging-houses, long inured to brutality—and, above all, brutality to sailors—shook their fists at heaven. If hands could have been laid on the captain of the *Gleaner*, his shrift would have been short. That night (so gossip reports) he was headed up in a barrel and smuggled across the bay. In two ships already he had braved the penitentiary and the gallows; and yet, by last

accounts, he now commands another on the Western Ocean.

As I have said, I was never quite certain whether Mr. Nares (the mate) did not intend that his superior should escape. It would have been like his preference of loyalty to law; it would have been like his prejudice, which was all in favour of the after-guard. But it must remain a matter of conjecture only. Well as I came to know him in the sequel, he was never communicative on that point—nor, indeed, on any that concerned the voyage of the *Gleaner*. Doubtless he had some reason for his reticence. Even during our walk to the police office he debated several times with Johnson, the third officer, whether he ought not to give up himself, as well as to denounce the captain. He had decided in the negative, arguing that 'it would probably come to nothing; and even if there was a stink, he had plenty good friends in San Francisco.' And to nothing it came; though it must have very nearly come to something, for Mr. Nares disappeared immediately from view, and was scarce less closely hidden than his captain.

Johnson, on the other hand, I often met. I could never learn this man's country; and though he himself claimed to be American, neither his English nor his education warranted the claim. In all likelihood he was of Scandinavian birth and blood, long pickled in the forecastles of English and American ships. It is possible that, like so many of his race in similar positions, he had already lost his native tongue. In mind, at least, he was quite denationalised; thought

only in English—to call it so ; and though by nature one of the mildest, kindest, and most feebly playful of mankind, he had been so long accustomed to the cruelty of sea discipline that his stories (told perhaps with a giggle) would sometimes turn me chill. In appearance he was tall, light of weight, bold and high-bred of feature, dusky-haired, and with a face of a clean even brown—the ornament of outdoor men. Seated in a chair, you might have passed him off for a baronet or a military officer; but let him rise, and it was Fo'c's'le Jack that came rolling toward you, crab-like ; let him but open his lips, and it was Fo'c's'le Jack that piped and drawled his ungrammatical gibberish. He had sailed (among other places) much among the islands ; and after a Cape Horn passage with its snow-squalls and its frozen sheets, he announced his intention of 'taking a turn among them Kanakas.' I thought I should have lost him soon ; but, according to the unwritten usage of mariners, he had first to dissipate his wages. 'Guess I 'll have to paint this town red,' was his hyperbolical expression ; for sure no man ever embarked upon a milder course of dissipation, most of his days being passed in the little parlour behind Black Tom's public-house, with a select corps of old particular acquaintances, all from the South Seas, and all patrons of a long yarn, a short pipe, and glasses round.

Black Tom's, to the front, presented the appearance of a fourth-rate saloon, devoted to Kanaka seamen, dirt, negrohead tobacco, bad cigars, worse

gin, and guitars and banjos in a state of decline. The proprietor, a powerful coloured man, was at once a publican, a ward politician, leader of some brigade of 'lambs' or 'smashers,' at the wind of whose clubs the party bosses and the mayor were supposed to tremble, and (what hurt nothing) an active and reliable crimp. His front quarters, then, were noisy, disreputable, and not even safe. I have seen worse-frequented saloons where there were fewer scandals; for Tom was often drunk himself: and there is no doubt the Lambs must have been a useful body, or the place would have been closed. I remember one day, not long before an election, seeing a blind man, very well dressed, led up to the counter and remain a long while in consultation with the negro. The pair looked so ill-assorted, and the awe with which the drinkers fell back and left them in the midst of an *impromptu* privacy was so unusual in such a place, that I turned to my next neighbour with a question. He told me the blind man was a distinguished party boss, called by some the King of San Francisco, but perhaps better known by his picturesque Chinese nickname of the Blind White Devil. 'The Lambs must be wanted pretty bad, I guess,' my informant added. I have here a sketch of the Blind White Devil leaning on the counter; on the next page, and taken the same hour, a jotting of Black Tom threatening a whole crowd of customers with a long Smith and Wesson—to such heights and depths we rose and fell in the front parts of the saloon!

Meanwhile, away in the back quarters, sat the small informal South Sea club, talking of another world, and surely of a different century. Old schooner captains they were, old South Sea traders, cooks, and mates; fine creatures, softened by residence among a softer race: full men besides, though not by reading, but by strange experience; and for days together I could hear their yarns with an unfading pleasure. All had, indeed, some touch of the poetic; for the beach-comber, when not a mere ruffian, is the poor relation of the artist. Even through Johnson's inarticulate speech, his 'O yes, there ain't no harm in them Kanakas,' or 'O yes, that 's a son of a gun of a fine island, mountainious right down; I didn't never ought to have left that island,' there pierced a certain gusto of appreciation; and some of the rest were master-talkers. From their long tales, their traits of character and unpremeditated landscape, there began to piece itself together in my head some image of the islands and the island life; precipitous shores, spired mountain-tops, the deep shade of hanging forests, the unresting surf upon the reef, and the unending peace of the lagoon; sun, moon, and stars of an imperial brightness; man moving in these scenes scarce fallen, and woman lovelier than Eve; the primal curse abrogated, the bed made ready for the stranger, life set to perpetual music, and the guest welcomed, the boat urged, and the long night beguiled with poetry and choral song. A man must have been an unsuccessful artist; he must have starved on the streets of

Paris; he must have been yoked to a commercial force like Pinkerton, before he can conceive the longings that at times assailed me. The draughty, rowdy city of San Francisco, the bustling office where my friend Jim paced like a caged lion daily between ten and four, even (at times) the retrospect of Paris, faded in comparison. Many a man less tempted would have thrown up all to realise his visions; but I was by nature unadventurous and uninitiative; to divert me from all former paths and send me cruising through the isles of paradise, some force external to myself must be exerted; Destiny herself must use the fitting wedge; and, little as I deemed it, that tool was already in her hand of brass.

I sat, one afternoon, in the corner of a great, glassy, silvered saloon, a free lunch at my one elbow, at the other a 'conscientious nude' from the brush of local talent; when, with the tramp of feet and a sudden buzz of voices, the swing-doors were flung broadly open, and the place carried as by storm. The crowd which thus entered (mostly seafaring men, and all prodigiously excited) contained a sort of kernel or general centre of interest, which the rest merely surrounded and advertised, as children in the Old World surround and escort the Punch-and-Judy man; the word went round the bar like wildfire that these were Captain Trent and the survivors of the British brig *Flying Scud*, picked up by a British war-ship on Midway Island, arrived that morning in San Francisco Bay, and now fresh from making the

necessary declarations. Presently I had a good sight of them; four brown, seamanlike fellows, standing by the counter, glass in hand, the centre of a score of questioners. One was a Kanaka—the cook, I was informed; one carried a cage with a canary, which occasionally trilled into thin song; one had his left arm in a sling, and looked gentlemanlike and somewhat sickly, as though the injury had been severe and he was scarce recovered; and the captain himself—a red-faced, blue-eyed, thickset man of five-and-forty—wore a bandage on his right hand. The incident struck me; I was struck particularly to see captain, cook, and foremost hands walking the street and visiting saloons in company; and, as when anything impressed me, I got my sketch-book out, and began to steal a sketch of the four castaways. The crowd, sympathising with my design, made a clear lane across the room; and I was thus enabled, all unobserved myself, to observe with a still growing closeness the face and the demeanour of Captain Trent.

Warmed by whisky and encouraged by the eagerness of the bystanders, that gentleman was now rehearsing the history of his misfortune. It was but scraps that reached me: how he 'filled her on the starboard tack,' and how 'it came up sudden out of the nor'-nor'-west,' and 'there she was, high and dry.' Sometimes he would appeal to one of the men—'That was how it was, Jack?'—and the man would reply, 'That was the way of it, Captain Trent.' Lastly, he started a fresh tide of popular sympathy

by enunciating the sentiment, 'Damn all these Admiralty Charts, and that's what I say!' From the nodding of heads and the murmurs of assent that followed, I could see that Captain Trent had established himself in the public mind as a gentleman and a thorough navigator: about which period, my sketch of the four men and the canary-bird being finished, and all (especially the canary-bird) excellent likenesses, I buckled up my book and slipped from the saloon.

Little did I suppose that I was leaving Act I. Scene 1 of the drama of my life; and yet the scene —or rather the captain's face—lingered for some time in my memory. I was no prophet, as I say; but I was something else—I was an observer; and one thing I knew—I knew when a man was terrified. Captain Trent, of the British brig *Flying Scud*, had been glib; he had been ready; he had been loud; but in his blue eyes I could detect the chill, and in the lines of his countenance spy the agitation, of perpetual terror. Was he trembling for his certificate? In my judgment it was some livelier kind of fear that thrilled in the man's marrow as he turned to drink. Was it the result of recent shock, and had he not yet recovered the disaster to his brig? I remembered how a friend of mine had been in a railway accident, and shook and started for a month; and although Captain Trent of the *Flying Scud* had none of the appearance of a nervous man, I told myself, with incomplete conviction, that his must be a similar case.

CHAPTER IX

THE WRECK OF THE 'FLYING SCUD'

THE next morning I found Pinkerton, who had risen before me, seated at our usual table, and deep in the perusal of what I will call the *Daily Occidental.* This was a paper (I know not if it be so still) that stood out alone among its brethren in the West. The others, down to their smallest item, were defaced with capitals, head-lines, alliterations, swaggering misquotations, and the shoddy picturesque and unpathetic pathos of the Harry Millers: the *Occidental* alone appeared to be written by a dull, sane, Christian gentleman, singly desirous of communicating knowledge. It had not only this merit—which endeared it to me—but was admittedly the best informed on business matters, which attracted Pinkerton.

'Loudon,' said he, looking up from the journal, 'you sometimes think I have too many irons in the fire. My notion, on the other hand, is, when you see a dollar lying, pick it up! Well, here I 've tumbled over a whole pile of 'em on a reef in the middle of the Pacific.'

'Why, Jim, you miserable fellow!' I exclaimed; haven't we Depew City, one of God's green centres for this State? haven't we——'

'Just listen to this,' interrupted Jim. 'It's miserable copy; these *Occidental* reporter fellows have no fire; but the facts are right enough, I guess.' And he began to read:—

WRECK OF THE BRITISH BRIG 'FLYING SCUD.'

H.B.M.S. *Tempest*, which arrived yesterday at this port, brings Captain Trent and four men of the British brig *Flying Scud*, cast away February 12th on Midway Island, and most providentially rescued the next day. The *Flying Scud* was of 200 tons burthen, owned in London, and has been out nearly two years tramping. Captain Trent left Hong Kong December 8th, bound for this port in rice and a small mixed cargo of silks, teas, and China notions, the whole valued at $10,000, fully covered by insurance. The log shows plenty of fine weather, with light airs, calms, and squalls. In lat. 28 N., long. 177 W., his water going rotten, and misled by Hoyt's *North Pacific Directory*, which informed him there was a coaling station on the island, Captain Trent put in to Midway Island. He found it a literal sandbank, surrounded by a coral reef, mostly submerged. Birds were very plenty, there was good fish in the lagoon, but no firewood; and the water, which could be obtained by digging, brackish. He found good holding-ground off the north end of the larger bank in fifteen fathoms water; bottom sandy, with coral patches. Here he was detained seven days by a calm, the crew suffering severely from the water, which was gone quite bad; and it was only on the evening of the 12th that a little wind sprang up, coming puffy out of N.N.E. Late as it was, Captain Trent immediately weighed anchor and attempted to get out. While the vessel was beating up to the passage, the wind took

a sudden lull, and then veered squally into N., and even N.N.W., driving the brig ashore on the sand at about twenty minutes before six o'clock. John Wallen, a native of Finland, and Charles Holdorsen, a native of Sweden, were drowned alongside, in attempting to lower a boat, neither being able to swim, the squall very dark, and the noise of the breakers drowning everything. At the same time John Brown, another of the crew, had his arm broken by the falls. Captain Trent further informed the *Occidental* reporter that the brig struck heavily at first bows on, he supposes upon coral; that she then drove over the obstacle, and now lies in sand, much down by the head, and with a list to starboard. In the first collision she must have sustained some damage, as she was making water forward. The rice will probably be all destroyed: but the more valuable part of the cargo is fortunately in the after-hold. Captain Trent was preparing his long-boat for sea, when the providential arrival of the *Tempest*, pursuant to Admiralty orders to call at islands in her course for castaways, saved the gallant captain from all further danger. It is scarcely necessary to add that both the officers and men of the unfortunate vessel speak in high terms of the kindness they received on board the man-of-war. We print a list of the survivors: Jacob Trent, master, of Hull, England; Elias Goddedaal, mate, native of Christiansand, Sweden; Ah Wing, cook, native of Sana, China; John Brown, native of Glasgow, Scotland; John Hardy, native of London, England. The *Flying Scud* is ten years old, and this morning will be sold as she stands, by order of Lloyd's agent, at public auction, for the benefit of the underwriters. The auction will take place in the Merchants' Exchange at ten o'clock.

Further Particulars.—Later in the afternoon the *Occidental* reporter found Lieutenant Sebright, first officer of H.B.M.S. *Tempest*, at the Palace Hotel. The gallant officer was somewhat pressed for time, but confirmed the account given by Captain Trent in all particulars. He added that the *Flying*

Scud is in an excellent berth, and, except in the highly improbable event of a heavy N.W. gale, might last until next winter.

'You will never know anything of literature,' said I, when Jim had finished. 'That is a good, honest, plain piece of work, and tells the story clearly. I see only one mistake: the cook is not a Chinaman; he is a Kanaka, and, I think, a Hawaiian.'

'Why, how do you know that?' asked Jim.

'I saw the whole gang yesterday in a saloon,' said I. 'I even heard the tale, or might have heard it, from Captain Trent himself, who struck me as thirsty and nervous.'

'Well, that's neither here nor there,' cried Pinkerton; 'the point is, how about these dollars lying on a reef?'

'Will it pay?' I asked.

'Pay like a sugar trust!' exclaimed Pinkerton. 'Don't you see what this British officer says about the safety? Don't you see the cargo's valued at ten thousand? Schooners are begging just now; I can get my pick of them at two hundred and fifty a month; and how does that foot up? It looks like three hundred per cent. to me.'

'You forget,' I objected, 'the captain himself declares the rice is damaged.'

'That's a point, I know,' admitted Jim. 'But the rice is the sluggish article, anyway; it's little more account than ballast; it's the tea and silks that I look to: all we have to find is the proportion,

and one look at the manifest will settle that. I 've rung up Lloyd's on purpose; the captain is to meet me there in an hour, and then I 'll be as posted on that brig as if I built her. Besides, you 've no idea what pickings there are about a wreck—copper, lead, rigging, anchors, chains, even the crockery, Loudon!'

'You seem to me to forget one trifle,' said I. 'Before you pick that wreck you 've got to buy her, and how much will she cost?'

'One hundred dollars,' replied Jim, with the promptitude of an automaton.

'How on earth do you guess that?' I cried.

'I don't guess; I know it,' answered the Commercial Force. 'My dear boy, I may be a galoot about literature, but you 'll always be an outsider in business. How do you suppose I bought the *James L. Moody* for two hundred and fifty, her boats alone worth four times the money? Because my name stood first in the list. Well, it stands there again; I have the naming of the figure, and I name a small one because of the distance: but it wouldn't matter what I named; that would be the price.'

'It sounds mysterious enough,' said I. 'Is this public auction conducted in a subterranean vault? Could a plain citizen—myself, for instance—come and see?'

'O, everything 's open and above-board!' he cried indignantly. 'Anybody can come, only nobody bids against us; and if he did, he would get frozen out. It 's been tried before now, and once was

enough. We hold the plant; we 've got the connection; we can afford to go higher than any outsider; there 's two million dollars in the ring; and we stick at nothing. Or suppose anybody did buy over our head—I tell you, Loudon, he would think this town gone crazy; he could no more get business through on the city front than I can dance; schooners, divers, men—all he wanted—the prices would fly right up and strike him.'

'But how did you get in?' I asked. 'You were once an outsider like your neighbours, I suppose?'

'I took hold of that thing, Loudon, and just studied it up,' he replied. 'It took my fancy; it was so romantic, and then I saw there was boodle in the thing; and I figured on the business till no man alive could give me points. Nobody knew I had an eye on wrecks till one fine morning I dropped in upon Douglas B. Longhurst in his den, gave him all the facts and figures, and put it to him straight: "Do you want me in this ring, or shall I start another?" He took half an hour, and when I came back, "Pink," says he, "I 've put your name on." The first time I came to the top it was that *Moody* racket; now it 's the *Flying Scud*.'

Whereupon Pinkerton, looking at his watch, uttered an exclamation, made a hasty appointment with myself for the doors of the Merchants' Exchange, and fled to examine manifests and interview the skipper. I finished my cigarette with the deliberation of a man at the end of many picnics; reflecting to myself that of all forms of the dollar-

hunt, this wrecking had by far the most address to my imagination. Even as I went down town, in the brisk bustle and chill of the familiar San Francisco thoroughfares, I was haunted by a vision of the wreck, baking so far away in the strong sun, under a cloud of sea-birds; and even then, and for no better reason, my heart inclined towards the adventure. If not myself, something that was mine, some one at least in my employment, should voyage to that ocean-bounded pin-point and descend to that deserted cabin.

Pinkerton met me at the appointed moment, pinched of lip, and more than usually erect of bearing, like one conscious of great resolves.

'Well?' I asked.

'Well,' said he, 'it might be better, and it might be worse. This Captain Trent is a remarkably honest fellow—one out of a thousand. As soon as he knew I was in the market, he owned up about the rice in so many words. By his calculation, if there's thirty mats of it saved, it's an outside figure. However, the manifest was cheerier. There's about five thousand dollars of the whole value in silks and teas and nut-oils and that, all in the lazarette, and as safe as if it was in Kearney Street. The brig was new coppered a year ago. There's upwards of a hundred and fifty fathom away-up chain. It's not a bonanza, but there's boodle in it; and we'll try it on.'

It was by that time hard on ten o'clock, and we turned at once into the place of sale. The *Flying*

Scud, although so important to ourselves, appeared to attract a very humble share of popular attention. The auctioneer was surrounded by perhaps a score of lookers-on—big fellows for the most part, of the true Western build, long in the leg, broad in the shoulder, and adorned (to a plain man's taste) with needless finery. A jaunty ostentatious comradeship prevailed. Bets were flying, and nicknames. 'The boys' (as they would have called themselves) were very boyish; and it was plain they were here in mirth, and not on business. Behind, and certainly in strong contrast to these gentlemen, I could detect the figure of my friend Captain Trent, come (as I could very well imagine that a captain would) to hear the last of his old vessel. Since yesterday he had rigged himself anew in ready-made black clothes, not very aptly fitted; the upper left-hand pocket showing a corner of silk handkerchief, the lower, on the other side, bulging with papers. Pinkerton had just given this man a high character. Certainly he seemed to have been very frank, and I looked at him again to trace (if possible) that virtue in his face. It was red and broad and flustered and (I thought) false. The whole man looked sick with some unknown anxiety; and as he stood there, unconscious of my observation, he tore at his nails, scowled on the floor, or glanced suddenly, sharply, and fearfully at passers-by. I was still gazing at the man in a kind of fascination, when the sale began.

Some preliminaries were rattled through, to the irreverent, uninterrupted gambolling of the boys;

and then, amid a trifle more attention, the auctioneer sounded for some two or three minutes the pipe of the charmer. 'Fine brig—new copper—valuable fittings—three fine boats—remarkably choice cargo —what the auctioneer would call a perfectly safe investment; nay, gentlemen, he would go further, he would put a figure on it: he had no hesitation (had that bold auctioneer) in putting it in figures; and in his view, what with this and that, and one thing and another, the purchaser might expect to clear a sum equal to the entire estimated value of the cargo; or, gentlemen, in other words, a sum of ten thousand dollars.' At this modest computation the roof immediately above the speaker's head (I suppose, through the intervention of a spectator of ventriloquial tastes) uttered a clear 'Cock-a-doodle-doo!'—whereat all laughed, the auctioneer himself obligingly joining.

'Now, gentlemen, what shall we say?' resumed that gentleman, plainly ogling Pinkerton,—'what shall we say for this remarkable opportunity?'

'One hundred dollars,' said Pinkerton.

'One hundred dollars from Mr. Pinkerton,' went the auctioneer, 'one hundred dollars. No other gentleman inclined to make any advance? One hundred dollars, only one hundred dollars——'

The auctioneer was droning on to some such tune as this, and I, on my part, was watching with something between sympathy and amazement the undisguised emotion of Captain Trent, when we were all startled by the interjection of a bid.

'And fifty,' said a sharp voice.

Pinkerton, the auctioneer, and the boys, who were all equally in the open secret of the ring, were now all equally and simultaneously taken aback.

'I beg your pardon,' said the auctioneer; 'anybody bid?'

'And fifty,' reiterated the voice, which I was now able to trace to its origin, on the lips of a small unseemly rag of human-kind. The speaker's skin was grey and blotched; he spoke in a kind of broken song, with much variety of key; his gestures seemed (as in the disease called Saint Vitus's dance) to be imperfectly under control; he was badly dressed; he carried himself with an air of shrinking assumption, as though he were proud to be where he was and to do what he was doing, and yet half expected to be called in question and kicked out. I think I never saw a man more of a piece; and the type was new to me: I had never before set eyes upon his parallel, and I thought instinctively of Balzac and the lower regions of the *Comédie Humaine*.

Pinkerton stared a moment on the intruder with no friendly eye, tore a leaf from his note-book, and scribbled a line in pencil, turned, beckoned a messenger boy, and whispered, 'To Longhurst.' Next moment the boy had sped upon his errand, and Pinkerton was again facing the auctioneer.

'Two hundred dollars,' said Jim.

'And fifty,' said the enemy.

'This looks lively,' whispered I to Pinkerton.

'Yes; the little beast means cold-drawn biz,'

returned my friend. 'Well, he 'll have to have a lesson. Wait till I see Longhurst.—Three hundred,' he added aloud.

'And fifty,' came the echo.

It was about this moment when my eye fell again on Captain Trent. A deeper shade had mounted to his crimson face; the new coat was unbuttoned and all flying open, the new silk handkerchief in busy requisition; and the man's eye, of a clear sailor blue, shone glassy with excitement. He was anxious still, but now (if I could read a face) there was hope in his anxiety.

'Jim,' I whispered, 'look at Trent. Bet you what you please he was expecting this.'

'Yes,' was the reply, 'there 's some blame' thing going on here'; and he renewed his bid.

The figure had run up into the neighbourhood of a thousand when I was aware of a sensation in the faces opposite, and, looking over my shoulder, saw a very large, bland, handsome man come strolling forth and make a little signal to the auctioneer.

'One word, Mr. Borden,' said he; and then to Jim, 'Well, Pink, where are we up to now?'

Pinkerton gave him the figure. 'I ran up to that on my own responsibility, Mr. Longhurst,' he added, with a flush. 'I thought it the square thing.'

'And so it was,' said Mr. Longhurst, patting him kindly on the shoulder, like a gratified uncle. 'Well, you can drop out now; we take hold ourselves. You can run it up to five thousand; and if he likes to go beyond that, he 's welcome to the bargain.'

'By-the-bye, who is he?' asked Pinkerton. 'He looks away down.'

'I've sent Billy to find out'; and at the very moment Mr. Longhurst received from the hands of one of the expensive young gentlemen a folded paper. It was passed round from one to another till it came to me, and I read: 'Harry D. Bellairs, Attorney-at-Law; defended Clara Varden: twice nearly disbarred.'

'Well, that gets me!' observed Mr. Longhurst. 'Who can have put up a shyster[1] like that? Nobody with money, that's a sure thing. Suppose you tried a big bluff? I think I would, Pink. Well, ta-ta! Your partner, Mr. Dodd? Happy to have the pleasure of your acquaintance, sir'; and the great man withdrew.

'Well, what do you think of Douglas B.?' whispered Pinkerton, looking reverently after him as he departed. 'Six foot of perfect gentleman and culture to his boots.'

During this interview the auction had stood transparently arrested—the auctioneer, the spectators, and even Bellairs, all well aware that Mr. Longhurst was the principal, and Jim but a speaking-trumpet. But now that the Olympian Jupiter was gone, Mr. Borden thought proper to affect severity.

'Come, come, Mr. Pinkerton; any advance?' he snapped.

And Pinkerton, resolved on the big bluff, replied, 'Two thousand dollars.'

[1] A low lawyer.

Bellairs preserved his composure. 'And fifty,' said he. But there was a stir among the onlookers, and—what was of more importance—Captain Trent had turned pale and visibly gulped.

'Pitch it in again, Jim,' said I. 'Trent is weakening.'

'Three thousand,' said Jim.

'And fifty,' said Bellairs.

And then the bidding returned to its original movement by hundreds and fifties; but I had been able in the meanwhile to draw two conclusions. In the first place, Bellairs had made his last advance with a smile of gratified vanity, and I could see the creature was glorying in the *kudos* of an unusual position and secure of ultimate success. In the second, Trent had once more changed colour at the thousand leap, and his relief when he heard the answering fifty was manifest and unaffected. Here, then, was a problem: both were presumably in the same interest, yet the one was not in the confidence of the other. Nor was this all. A few bids later it chanced that my eye encountered that of Captain Trent, and his, which glittered with excitement, was instantly, and I thought guiltily, withdrawn. He wished, then, to conceal his interest? As Jim had said, there was some blamed thing going on. And for certain here were these two men, so strangely united, so strangely divided, both sharp-set to keep the wreck from us, and that at an exorbitant figure.

Was the wreck worth more than we supposed? A sudden heat was kindled in my brain; the bids

were nearing Longhurst's limit of five thousand; another minute and all would be too late. Tearing a leaf from my sketch-book, and inspired (I suppose) by vanity in my own powers of inference and observation, I took the one mad decision of my life. 'If you care to go ahead,' I wrote, 'I 'm in for all I 'm worth.'

Jim read and looked round at me like one bewildered; then his eyes lightened, and turning again to the auctioneer he bid, 'Five thousand one hundred dollars.'

'And fifty,' said monotonous Bellairs.

Presently Pinkerton scribbled, 'What can it be?' and I answered, still on paper: 'I can't imagine, but there 's something. Watch Bellairs; he 'll go up to the ten thousand, see if he don't.'

And he did, and we followed. Long before this word had gone abroad that there was battle royal. We were surrounded by a crowd that looked on wondering, and when Pinkerton had offered ten thousand dollars (the outside value of the cargo, even were it safe in San Francisco Bay) and Bellairs, smirking from ear to ear to be the centre of so much attention, had jerked out his answering 'And fifty,' wonder deepened to excitement.

'Ten thousand one hundred,' said Jim; and even as he spoke he made a sudden gesture with his hand, his face changed, and I could see that he had guessed, or thought that he had guessed, the mystery. As he scrawled another memorandum in his note-book, his hand shook like a telegraph operator's.

'Chinese ship,' ran the legend; and then in big, tremulous half-text, and with a flourish that overran the margin, 'Opium!'

'To be sure,' thought I, 'this must be the secret.' I knew that scarce a ship came in from any Chinese port but she carried somewhere, behind a bulkhead or in some cunning hollow of the beams, a nest of the valuable poison. Doubtless there was some such treasure on the *Flying Scud*. How much was it worth? We knew not; we were gambling in the dark. But Trent knew, and Bellairs; and we could only watch and judge.

By this time neither Pinkerton nor I were of sound mind. Pinkerton was beside himself, his eyes like lamps; I shook in every member. To any stranger entering, say, in the course of the fifteenth thousand, we should probably have cut a poorer figure than Bellairs himself. But we did not pause; and the crowd watched us—now in silence, now with a buzz of whispers.

Seventeen thousand had been reached, when Douglas B. Longhurst, forcing his way into the opposite row of faces, conspicuously and repeatedly shook his head at Jim. Jim's answer was a note of two words: 'My racket!' which, when the great man had perused, he shook his finger warningly and departed—I thought, with a sorrowful countenance.

Although Mr. Longhurst knew nothing of Bellairs, the shady lawyer knew all about the Wrecker Boss. He had seen him enter the ring with manifest expec-

tation; he saw him depart, and the bids continue, with manifest surprise and disappointment. 'Hullo,' he plainly thought, 'this is not the ring I 'm fighting, then?' And he determined to put on a spurt.

'Eighteen thousand,' said he.

'And fifty,' said Jim, taking a leaf out of his adversary's book.

'Twenty thousand,' from Bellairs.

'And fifty,' from Jim, with a little nervous titter.

And with one consent they returned to the old pace—only now it was Bellairs who took the hundreds, and Jim who did the fifty business. But by this time our idea had gone abroad. I could hear the word 'opium' pass from mouth to mouth, and by the looks directed at us I could see we were supposed to have some private information. And here an incident occurred highly typical of San Francisco. Close at my back there had stood for some time a stout middle-aged gentleman, with pleasant eyes, hair pleasantly grizzled, and a ruddy pleasing face. All of a sudden he appeared as a third competitor, skied the *Flying Scud* with four fat bids of a thousand dollars each, and then as suddenly fled the field, remaining thenceforth (as before) a silent, interested spectator.

Ever since Mr. Longhurst's useless intervention Bellairs had seemed uneasy, and at this new attack he began (in his turn) to scribble a note between the bids. I imagined, naturally enough, that it would go to Captain Trent; but when it was done, and the writer turned and looked behind him in the crowd,

to my unspeakable amazement he did not seem to remark the captain's presence.

'Messenger boy, messenger boy!' I heard him say. 'Somebody call me a messenger boy.'

At last somebody did, but it was not the captain.

'*He's sending for instructions,*' I wrote to Pinkerton.

'*For money,*' he wrote back. '*Shall I strike out? I think this is the time.*'

I nodded.

'Thirty thousand,' said Pinkerton, making a leap of close upon three thousand dollars.

I could see doubt in Bellairs's eye; then, sudden resolution. 'Thirty-five thousand,' said he.

'Forty thousand,' said Pinkerton.

There was a long pause, during which Bellairs's countenance was as a book; and then, not much too soon for the impending hammer, 'Forty thousand and five dollars,' said he.

Pinkerton and I exchanged eloquent glances. We were of one mind. Bellairs had tried a bluff; now he perceived his mistake, and was bidding against time; he was trying to spin out the sale until the messenger boy returned.

'Forty-five thousand dollars,' said Pinkerton: his voice was like a ghost's and tottered with emotion.

'Forty-five thousand and five dollars,' said Bellairs.

'Fifty thousand,' said Pinkerton.

'I beg your pardon, Mr. Pinkerton. Did I hear you make an advance, sir?' asked the auctioneer.

'I—I have a difficulty in speaking,' gasped Jim. 'It 's fifty thousand, Mr. Borden.'

Bellairs was on his feet in a moment. 'Auctioneer,' he said, 'I have to beg the favour of three moments at the telephone. In this matter I am acting on behalf of a certain party to whom I have just written——'

'I have nothing to do with any of this,' said the auctioneer brutally. 'I am here to sell this wreck. Do you make any advance on fifty thousand?'

'I have the honour to explain to you, sir,' returned Bellairs, with a miserable assumption of dignity, 'fifty thousand was the figure named by my principal; but if you will give me the small favour of two moments at the telephone——'

'O, nonsense!' said the auctioneer. 'If you make no advance, I 'll knock it down to Mr. Pinkerton.'

'I warn you,' cried the attorney, with sudden shrillness. 'Have a care what you 're about. You are here to sell for the underwriters, let me tell you —not to act for Mr. Douglas Longhurst. This sale has been already disgracefully interrupted to allow that person to hold a consultation with his minions; it has been much commented on.'

'There was no complaint at the time,' said the auctioneer, manifestly discountenanced. 'You should have complained at the time.'

'I am not here to conduct this sale,' replied Bellairs; 'I am not paid for that.'

'Well, I am, you see,' retorted the auctioneer, his

impudence quite restored; and he resumed his sing-song. 'Any advance on fifty thousand dollars? No advance on fifty thousand? No advance, gentlemen? Going at fifty thousand, the wreck of the brig *Flying Scud*—going—going—gone!'

'My God, Jim, can we pay the money?' I cried, as the stroke of the hammer seemed to recall me from a dream.

'It 's got to be raised,' said he, white as a sheet. 'It 'll be a hell of a strain, Loudon. The credit 's good for it, I think; but I shall have to get around. Write me a cheque for your stuff. Meet me at the Occidental in an hour.'

I wrote my cheque at a desk, and I declare I could never have recognised my signature. Jim was gone in a moment; Trent had vanished even earlier; only Bellairs remained, exchanging insults with the auctioneer; and, behold! as I pushed my way out of the exchange, who should run full tilt into my arms but the messenger boy!

It was by so near a margin that we became the owners of the *Flying Scud*.

CHAPTER X

IN WHICH THE CREW VANISH

At the door of the exchange I found myself alongside of the short middle-aged gentleman who had made an appearance, so vigorous and so brief, in the great battle.

'Congratulate you, Mr. Dodd,' he said. 'You and your friend stuck to your guns nobly.'

'No thanks to you, sir,' I replied, 'running us up a thousand at a time, and tempting all the speculators in San Francisco to come and have a try.'

'O, that was temporary insanity,' said he; 'and I thank the higher powers I am still a free man. Walking this way, Mr. Dodd? I'll walk along with you. It's pleasant for an old fogey like myself to see the young bloods in the ring; I've done some pretty wild gambles in my time in this very city, when it was a smaller place and I was a younger man. Yes, I know you, Mr. Dodd. By sight, I may say I know you extremely well, you and your followers, the fellows in the kilts, eh? Pardon me. But I have the misfortune to own a little box on

the Saucelito shore. I'll be glad to see you there any Sunday—without the fellows in kilts, you know; and I can give you a bottle of wine, and show you the best collection of Arctic voyages in the States. Morgan is my name—Judge Morgan—a Welshman and a forty-niner.'

'O, if you're a pioneer,' cried I, 'come to me, and I'll provide you with an axe.'

'You'll want your axes for yourself, I fancy,' he returned, with one of his quick looks. 'Unless you have private knowledge, there will be a good deal of rather violent wrecking to do before you find that—opium, do you call it?'

'Well, it's either opium, or we are stark staring mad,' I replied. 'But I assure you we have no private information. We went in (as I suppose you did yourself) on observation.'

'An observer, sir?' inquired the judge.

'I may say it is my trade—or, rather, was,' said I.

'Well now, and what did you think of Bellairs?' he asked.

'Very little indeed,' said I.

'I may tell you,' continued the judge, 'that to me the employment of a fellow like that appears inexplicable. I knew him: he knows me, too; he has often heard from me in court; and I assure you the man is utterly blown upon; it is not safe to trust him with a dollar, and here we find him dealing up to fifty thousand. I can't think who can have so trusted him, but I am very sure it was a stranger in San Francisco.'

'Some one for the owners, I suppose,' said I.

'Surely not!' exclaimed the judge. 'Owners in London can have nothing to say to opium smuggled between Hong Kong and San Francisco. I should rather fancy they would be the last to hear of it—until the ship was seized. No; I was thinking of the captain. But where would he get the money—above all, after having laid out so much to buy the stuff in China?—unless, indeed, he were acting for some one in 'Frisco; and in that case—here we go round again in the vicious circle—Bellairs would not have been employed.'

'I think I can assure you it was not the captain,' said I, 'for he and Bellairs are not acquainted.'

'Wasn't that the captain with the red face and coloured handkerchief? He seemed to me to follow Bellairs's game with the most thrilling interest,' objected Mr. Morgan.

'Perfectly true,' said I. 'Trent is deeply interested; he very likely knew Bellairs, and he certainly knew what he was there for; but I can put my hand in the fire that Bellairs didn't know Trent.'

'Another singularity,' observed the judge. 'Well, we have had a capital forenoon. But you take an old lawyer's advice, and get to Midway Island as fast as you can. There's a pot of money on the table, and Bellairs and Co. are not the men to stick at trifles.'

With this parting counsel Judge Morgan shook hands and made off along Montgomery Street, while I entered the Occidental Hotel, on the steps of

which we had finished our conversation. I was well known to the clerks, and as soon as it was understood that I was there to wait for Pinkerton and lunch, I was invited to a seat inside the counter. Here, then, in a retired corner, I was beginning to come a little to myself after these so violent experiences, when who should come hurrying in, and (after a moment with a clerk) fly to one of the telephone-boxes but Mr. Henry D. Bellairs in person! Call it what you will, but the impulse was irresistible, and I rose and took a place immediately at the man's back. It may be some excuse that I had often practised this very innocent form of eavesdropping upon strangers and for fun. Indeed, I scarce know anything that gives a lower view of man's intelligence than to overhear (as you thus do) one side of a communication.

'Central,' said the attorney, '2241 and 584 B' (or some such numbers)—'Who 's that?—All right—Mr. Bellairs—Occidental; the wires are fouled in the other place—Yes, about three minutes—Yes—Yes—Your figure, I am sorry to say—No—I had no authority—Neither more nor less—I have every reason to suppose so—O, Pinkerton, Montana Block—Yes—Yes—Very good, sir—As you will, sir—Disconnect 584 B.'

Bellairs turned to leave; at sight of me behind him, up flew his hands, and he winced and cringed, as though in fear of bodily attack. 'O, it 's you!' he cried; and then, somewhat recovered, 'Mr. Pinkerton's partner, I believe? I am pleased to see you,

sir—to congratulate you on your late success'; and with that he was gone, obsequiously bowing as he passed.

And now a madcap humour came upon me. It was plain Bellairs had been communicating with his principal; I knew the number, if not the name. Should I ring up at once? It was more than likely he would return in person to the telephone. Why should not I dash (vocally) into the presence of this mysterious person, and have some fun for my money? I pressed the bell.

'Central,' said I, 'connect again 2241 and 584 B.'

A phantom central repeated the numbers; there was a pause, and then 'Two two four one,' came in a tiny voice into my ear—a voice with the English sing-song—the voice plainly of a gentleman. 'Is that you again, Mr. Bellairs?' it trilled. 'I tell you it's no use. Is that you, Mr. Bellairs? Who is that?'

'I only want to put a single question,' said I, civilly. 'Why do you want to buy the *Flying Scud*?'

No answer came. The telephone vibrated and hummed in miniature with all the numerous talk of a great city: but the voice of 2241 was silent. Once and twice I put my question; but the tiny sing-song English voice I heard no more. The man, then, had fled—fled from an impertinent question. It scarce seemed natural to me—unless on the principle that the wicked fleeth when no man

pursueth. I took the telephone list and turned the number up: '2241, Mrs. Keane, res. 942 Mission Street.' And that, short of driving to the house and renewing my impertinence in person, was all that I could do.

Yet, as I resumed my seat in the corner of the office, I was conscious of a new element of the uncertain, the underhand, perhaps even the dangerous, in our adventure; and there was now a new picture in my mental gallery, to hang beside that of the wreck under its canopy of sea-birds and of Captain Trent mopping his red brow—the picture of a man with a telephone dice-box to his ear, and at the small voice of a single question struck suddenly as white as ashes.

From these considerations I was awakened by the striking of the clock. An hour and nearly twenty minutes had elapsed since Pinkerton departed for the money: he was twenty minutes behind time; and to me, who knew so well his gluttonous despatch of business, and had so frequently admired his iron punctuality, the fact spoke volumes. The twenty minutes slowly stretched into an hour; the hour had nearly extended to a second; and I still sat in my corner of the office, or paced the marble pavement of the hall, a prey to the most wretched anxiety and penitence. The hour for lunch was nearly over before I remembered that I had not eaten. Heaven knows I had no appetite; but there might still be much to do—it was needful I should keep myself in proper trim, if it were only to digest the now too

probable bad news; and leaving word at the office for Pinkerton, I sat down to table and called for soup, oysters, and a pint of champagne.

I was not long set before my friend returned. He looked pale and rather old, refused to hear of food, and called for tea.

'I suppose all 's up?' said I, with an incredible sinking.

'No,' he replied; 'I 've pulled it through, Loudon —just pulled it through. I couldn't have raised another cent in all 'Frisco. People don't like it; Longhurst even went back on me; said he wasn't a three-card-monte man.'

'Well, what 's the odds?' said I. 'That 's all we wanted, isn't it?'

'Loudon, I tell you I 've had to pay blood for that money,' cried my friend, with almost savage energy and gloom. 'It 's all on ninety days, too; I couldn't get another day—not another day. If we go ahead with this affair, Loudon, you 'll have to go yourself and make the fur fly. I 'll stay, of course—I 've got to stay and face the trouble in this city; though, I tell you, I just long to go. I would show these fat brutes of sailors what work was; I would be all through that wreck and out at the other end, before they had boosted themselves upon the deck! But you 'll do your level best, Loudon; I depend on you for that. You must be all fire and grit and dash from the word "go." That schooner, and the boodle on board of her, are bound to be here before three months, or it 's B U S T—bust.'

'I 'll swear I 'll do my best, Jim; I 'll work double tides,' said I. 'It is my fault that you are in this thing, and I 'll get you out again, or kill myself. But what is that you say? "If we go ahead?" Have we any choice, then?'

'I 'm coming to that,' said Jim. 'It isn't that I doubt the investment. Don't blame yourself for that; you showed a fine sound business instinct: I always knew it was in you, but then it ripped right out. I guess that little beast of an attorney knew what he was doing; and he wanted nothing better than to go beyond. No, there 's profit in the deal; it 's not that; it 's these ninety-day bills, and the strain I 've given the credit—for I 've been up and down borrowing, and begging and bribing to borrow. I don't believe there 's another man but me in 'Frisco,' he cried, with a sudden fervour of self-admiration, 'who could have raised that last ten thousand! Then there 's another thing. I had hoped you might have peddled that opium through the islands, which is safer and more profitable. But with this three-month limit, you must make tracks for Honolulu straight, and communicate by steamer. I 'll try to put up something for you there; I 'll have a man spoken to who 's posted on that line of biz. Keep a bright look-out for him as soon's you make the islands; for it 's on the cards he might pick you up at sea in a whaleboat or a steam-launch, and bring the dollars right on board.'

It shows how much I had suffered morally during my sojourn in San Francisco that even now, when

our fortunes trembled in the balance, I should have consented to become a smuggler—and (of all things) a smuggler of opium. Yet I did, and that in silence; without a protest, not without a twinge.

'And suppose,' said I, 'suppose the opium is so securely hidden that I can't get hands on it?'

'Then you will stay there till that brig is kindling-wood, and stay and split that kindling-wood with your penknife,' cried Pinkerton. 'The stuff is there; we know that; and it must be found. But all this is only the one string to our bow—though I tell you I've gone into it head-first, as if it was our bottom dollar. Why, the first thing I did before I'd raised a cent, and with this other notion in my head already—the first thing I did was to secure the schooner. The *Norah Creina* she is, sixty-four tons—quite big enough for our purpose since the rice is spoiled, and the fastest thing of her tonnage out of San Francisco. For a bonus of two hundred, and a monthly charter of three, I have her for my own time; wages and provisions, say four hundred more: a drop in the bucket. They began firing the cargo out of her (she was part loaded) near two hours ago; and about the same time John Smith got the order for the stores. That's what I call business.'

'No doubt of that,' said I; 'but the other notion?'

'Well, here it is,' said Jim. 'You agree with me that Bellairs was ready to go higher?'

'I saw where he was coming. 'Yes—and why shouldn't he?' said I. 'Is that the line?'

'That's the line, Loudon Dodd,' assented Jim.

'If Bellairs and his principal have any desire to go me better, I 'm their man.'

A sudden thought, a sudden fear, shot into my mind. What if I had been right? What if my childish pleasantry had frightened the principal away, and thus destroyed our chance? Shame closed my mouth; I began instinctively a long course of reticence; and it was without a word of my meeting with Bellairs, or my discovery of the address in Mission Street, that I continued the discussion.

'Doubtless fifty thousand was originally mentioned as a round sum,' said I, 'or, at least, so Bellairs supposed. But at the same time it may be an outside sum; and to cover the expenses we have already incurred for the money and the schooner—I am far from blaming you; I see how needful it was to be ready for either event—but to cover them we shall want a rather large advance.'

'Bellairs will go to sixty thousand; it 's my belief, if he were properly handled, he would take the hundred,' replied Pinkerton. 'Look back on the way the sale ran at the end.'

'That is my own impression as regards Bellairs, I admitted; 'the point I am trying to make is that Bellairs himself may be mistaken; that what he supposed to be a round sum was really an outside figure.'

'Well, Loudon, if that is so,' said Jim, with extraordinary gravity of face and voice, 'if that is so, let him take the *Flying Scud* at fifty thousand, and joy go with her! I prefer the loss.'

'Is that so, Jim? Are we dipped as bad as that?' I cried.

'We've put our hand farther out than we can pull it in again, Loudon,' he replied. 'Why, man, that fifty thousand dollars, before we get clear again, will cost us nearer seventy. Yes, it figures up overhead to more than ten per cent. a month; and I could do no better, and there isn't the man breathing could have done as well. It was a miracle, Loudon. I couldn't but admire myself. O, if we had just the four months! And you know, Loudon, it may still be done. With your energy and charm, if the worst comes to the worst, you can run that schooner as you ran one of your picnics; and we may have luck. And O man! if we do pull it through, what a dashing operation it will be! What an advertisement! what a thing to talk of and remember all our lives! However,' he broke off suddenly, 'we must try the safe thing first. Here's for the shyster!'

There was another struggle in my mind, whether I should even now admit my knowledge of the Mission Street address. But I had let the favourable moment slip. I had now, which made it the more awkward, not merely the original discovery, but my late suppression to confess. I could not help reasoning, besides, that the more natural course was to approach the principal by the road of his agent's office; and there weighed upon my spirits a conviction that we were already too late, and that the man was gone two hours ago. Once more, then, I held my peace; and after an exchange of words at

the telephone to assure ourselves he was at home, we set out for the attorney's office.

The endless streets of any American city pass, from one end to another, through strange degrees and vicissitudes of splendour and distress, running under the same name between monumental warehouses, the dens and taverns of thieves, and the sward and shrubbery of villas. In San Francisco the sharp inequalities of the ground, and the sea bordering on so many sides, greatly exaggerate these contrasts. The street for which we were now bound took its rise among blowing sands, somewhere in view of the Lone Mountain Cemetery; ran for a term across that rather windy Olympus of Nob Hill, or perhaps just skirted its frontier; passed almost immediately after through a stage of little houses, rather impudently painted, and offering to the eye of the observer this diagnostic peculiarity, that the huge brass plates upon the small and highly-coloured doors bore only the first names of ladies—Norah or Lily or Florence; traversed China Town, where it was doubtless undermined with opium cellars, and its blocks pierced, after the similitude of rabbit-warrens, with a hundred doors and passages and galleries; enjoyed a glimpse of high publicity at the corner of Kearney; and proceeded, among dives and warehouses, towards the City Front and the region of the water-rats. In this last stage of its career, where it was both grimy and solitary, and alternately quiet and roaring to the wheels of drays, we found a certain house of some pretension to neatness, and

furnished with a rustic outside stair. On the pillar of the stair a black plate bore in gilded lettering this device: 'Harry D. Bellairs, Attorney-at-law. Consultations, 9 to 6.' On ascending the stairs a door was found to stand open on the balcony, with this further inscription, 'Mr. Bellairs In.'

'I wonder what we do next,' said I.

'Guess we sail right in,' returned Jim, and suited the action to the word.

The room in which we found ourselves was clean, but extremely bare. A rather old-fashioned secretaire stood by the wall, with a chair drawn to the desk; in one corner was a shelf with half-a-dozen law-books; and I can remember literally not another stick of furniture. One inference imposed itself: Mr. Bellairs was in the habit of sitting down himself and suffering his clients to stand. At the far end, and veiled by a curtain of red baize, a second door communicated with the interior of the house. Hence, after some coughing and stamping, we elicited the shyster, who came timorously forth, for all the world like a man in fear of bodily assault, and then, recognising his guests, suffered from what I can only call a nervous paroxysm of courtesy.

'Mr. Pinkerton and partner!' said he. 'I will go and fetch you seats.'

'Not the least,' said Jim. 'No time. Much rather stand. This is business, Mr. Bellairs. This morning, as you know, I bought the wreck *Flying Scud.*'

The lawyer nodded.

'And bought her,' pursued my friend, 'at a figure out of all proportion to the cargo and the circumstances, as they appeared.'

'And now you think better of it, and would like to be off with your bargain? I have been figuring upon this,' returned the lawyer. 'My client, I will not hide from you, was displeased with me for putting her so high. I think we were both too heated, Mr. Pinkerton: rivalry—the spirit of competition. But I will be quite frank—I know when I am dealing with gentlemen—and I am almost certain, if you leave the matter in my hands, my client would relieve you of the bargain, so as you would lose'—he consulted our faces with gimlet-eyed calculation—'nothing,' he added shrilly.

And here Pinkerton amazed me.

'That 's a little too thin,' said he. 'I have the wreck. I know there 's boodle in her, and I mean to keep her. What I want is some points which may save me needless expense, and which I 'm prepared to pay for, money down. The thing for you to consider is just this, Am I to deal with you or direct with your principal? If you are prepared to give me the facts right off, why, name your figure. Only one thing,' added Jim, holding a finger up, 'when I say "money down" I mean bills payable when the ship returns, and if the information proves reliable. I don't buy pigs in pokes.'

I had seen the lawyer's face light up for a moment, and then, at the sound of Jim's proviso, miserably fade. 'I guess you know more about this wreck

than I do, Mr. Pinkerton,' said he. 'I only know that I was told to buy the thing, and tried, and couldn't.'

'What I like about you, Mr. Bellairs, is that you waste no time,' said Jim. 'Now then, your client's name and address.'

'On consideration,' replied the lawyer, with indescribable furtivity, 'I cannot see that I am entitled to communicate my client's name. I will sound him for you with pleasure, if you care to instruct me, but I cannot see that I can give you his address.'

'Very well,' said Jim, and put his hat on. 'Rather a strong step, isn't it?' (Between every sentence was a clear pause.) 'Not think better of it? Well, come, call it a dollar?'

'Mr. Pinkerton, sir!' exclaimed the offended attorney; and, indeed, I myself was almost afraid that Jim had mistaken his man and gone too far.

'No present use for a dollar?' says Jim. 'Well, look here, Mr. Bellairs—we 're both busy men, and I 'll go to my outside figure with you right away——'

'Stop this, Pinkerton,' I broke in. 'I know the address: 924 Mission Street.'

I do not know whether Pinkerton or Bellairs was the more taken aback.

'Why in snakes didn't you say so, Loudon?' cried my friend.

'You didn't ask for it before,' said I, colouring to my temples under his troubled eyes.

It was Bellairs who broke silence, kindly supplying me with all that I had yet to learn. 'Since you

know Mr. Dickson's address,' said he, plainly burning to be rid of us, 'I suppose I need detain you no longer.'

I do not know how Pinkerton felt, but I had death in my soul as we came down the outside stair from the den of this blotched spider. My whole being was strung, waiting for Jim's first question, and prepared to blurt out—I believe, almost with tears—a full avowal. But my friend asked nothing.

'We must hack it,' said he, tearing off in the direction of the nearest stand. 'No time to be lost. You saw how I changed ground. No use in paying the shyster's commission.'

Again I expected a reference to my suppression; again I was disappointed. It was plain Jim feared the subject, and I felt I almost hated him for that fear. At last, when we were already in the hack and driving towards Mission Street, I could bear my suspense no longer.

'You do not ask me about that address,' said I.

'No,' said he, quickly and timidly, 'what was it? I would like to know.'

The note of timidity offended me like a buffet; my temper rose as hot as mustard. 'I must request you do not ask me,' said I; 'it is a matter I cannot explain.'

The moment the foolish words were said, that moment I would have given worlds to recall them; how much more when Pinkerton, patting my hand, replied, 'All right, dear boy, not another word; that's all done; I'm convinced it's perfectly right!'

To return upon the subject was beyond my courage; but I vowed inwardly that I should do my utmost in the future for this mad speculation, and that I would cut myself in pieces before Jim should lose one dollar.

We had no sooner arrived at the address than I had other things to think of.

'Mr. Dickson? He 's gone,' said the landlady.

Where had he gone?

'I 'm sure I can't tell you,' she answered. 'He was quite a stranger to me.'

'Did he express his baggage, ma'am?' asked Pinkerton.

'Hadn't any,' was the reply. 'He came last night, and left again to-day with a satchel.'

'When did he leave?' I inquired.

'It was about noon,' replied the landlady. 'Some one rang up the telephone, and asked for him; and I reckon he got some news, for he left right away, although his rooms were taken by the week. He seemed considerable put out: I reckon it was a death.'

My heart sank; perhaps my idiotic jest had indeed driven him away; and again I asked myself, 'Why?' and whirled for a moment in a vortex of untenable hypotheses.

'What was he like, ma'am?' Pinkerton was asking, when I returned to consciousness of my surroundings.

'A clean-shaved man,' said the woman, and could be led or driven into no more significant description.

'Pull up at the nearest drug-store,' said Pinkerton to the driver; and when there, the telephone was put in operation, and the message sped to the Pacific Mail Steamship Company's office—this was in the days before Spreckels had arisen—'When does the next China steamer touch at Honolulu?'

'The *City of Pekin*; she cast off the dock to-day, at half-past one,' came the reply.

'It's a clear case of bolt,' said Jim. 'He's skipped, or my name's not Pinkerton. He's gone to head us off at Midway Island.'

Somehow I was not so sure; there were elements in the case not known to Pinkerton—the fears of the captain, for example—that inclined me otherwise; and the idea that I had terrified Mr. Dickson into flight, though resting on so slender a foundation, clung obstinately in my mind.

'Shouldn't we see the list of passengers?' I asked.

'Dickson is such a blamed common name,' returned Jim; 'and then, as like as not, he would change it.'

At this I had another intuition. A negative of a street scene, taken unconsciously when I was absorbed in other thought, rose in my memory with not a feature blurred: a view, from Bellairs's door as we were coming down, of muddy roadway, passing drays, matted telegraph wires, a China-boy with a basket on his head, and (almost opposite) a corner grocery with the name of Dickson in great gilt letters.

'Yes,' said I, 'you are right; he would change it.

And anyway, I don't believe it was his name at all; I believe he took it from a corner grocery beside Bellairs's.'

'As like as not,' said Jim, still standing on the side walk with contracted brows.

'Well, what shall we do next?' I asked.

'The natural thing would be to rush the schooner,' he replied. 'But I don't know. I telephoned the captain to go at it head down and heels in air; he answered like a little man; and I guess he's getting around. I believe, Loudon, we'll give Trent a chance. Trent was in it; he was in it up to the neck; even if he couldn't buy, he could give us the straight tip.'

'I think so, too,' said I. 'Where shall we find him?'

'British consulate, of course,' said Jim. 'And that's another reason for taking him first. We can hustle that schooner up all evening; but when the consulate 's shut, it 's shut.'

At the consulate we learned that Captain Trent had alighted (such is, I believe, the classic phrase) at the What Cheer House. To that large and unaristocratic hostelry we drove, and addressed ourselves to a large clerk, who was chewing a toothpick and looking straight before him.

'Captain Jacob Trent?'

'Gone,' said the clerk.

'Where has he gone?' asked Pinkerton.

'Cain't say,' said the clerk.

'When did he go?' I asked.

'Don't know,' said the clerk, and with the sim-

plicity of a monarch offered us the spectacle of his broad back.

What might have happened next I dread to picture, for Pinkerton's excitement had been growing steadily, and now burned dangerously high; but we were spared extremities by the intervention of a second clerk.

'Why, Mr. Dodd!' he exclaimed, running forward to the counter. 'Glad to see you, sir! Can I do anything in your way?'

How virtuous actions blossom! Here was a young man to whose pleased ears I had rehearsed 'Just before the Battle, Mother,' at some weekly picnic; and now, in that tense moment of my life, he came (from the machine) to be my helper.

'Captain Trent, of the wreck? O yes, Mr. Dodd; he left about twelve; he and another of the men. The Kanaka went earlier, by the *City of Pekin*; I know that; I remember expressing his chest. Captain Trent? I'll inquire, Mr. Dodd. Yes, they were all here. Here are the names on the register; perhaps you would care to look at them while I go and see about the baggage?'

I drew the book toward me, and stood looking at the four names, all written in the same hand—rather a big, and rather a bad one: Trent, Brown, Hardy, and (instead of Ah Sing) Jos. Amalu.

'Pinkerton,' said I, suddenly, 'have you that *Occidental* in your pocket?'

'Never left me,' said Pinkerton, producing the paper.

I turned to the account of the wreck.

'Here,' said I, 'here 's the name. "Elias Goddedaal, mate." Why do we never come across Elias Goddedaal?'

'That 's so,' said Jim. 'Was he with the rest in that saloon when you saw them?'

'I don't believe it,' said I. 'They were only four, and there was none that behaved like a mate.'

At this moment the clerk returned with his report.

'The captain,' it appeared, 'came with some kind of an express wagon, and he and the man took off three chests and a big satchel. Our porter helped to put them on, but they drove the cart themselves. The porter thinks they went down town. It was about one.'

'Still in time for the *City of Pekin*,' observed Jim.

'How many of them were here?' I inquired.

'Three, sir, and the Kanaka,' replied the clerk. 'The third, but he 's gone too.'

'Mr. Goddedaal, the mate, wasn't here then?' I asked.

'No, Mr. Dodd, none but what you see,' says the clerk.

'Nor you never heard where he was?'

'No. Any particular reason for finding these men, Mr. Dodd?' inquired the clerk.

'This gentleman and I have bought the wreck,' I explained; 'we wished to get some information, and it is very annoying to find the men all gone.'

A certain group had gradually formed about us, for the wreck was still a matter of interest; and at

this, one of the bystanders, a rough seafaring man, spoke suddenly.

'I guess the mate won't be gone,' said he. 'He's main sick; never left the sick-bay aboard the *Tempest;* so they tell *me.*'

Jim took me by the sleeve. 'Back to the consulate,' said he.

But even at the consulate nothing was known of Mr. Goddedaal. The doctor of the *Tempest* had certified him very sick; he had sent his papers in, but never appeared in person before the authorities.

'Have you a telephone laid on to the *Tempest*?' asked Pinkerton.

'Laid on yesterday,' said the clerk.

'Do you mind asking, or letting me ask? We are very anxious to get hold of Mr. Goddedaal.'

'All right,' said the clerk, and turned to the telephone. 'I'm sorry,' he said presently, 'Mr. Goddedaal has left the ship, and no one knows where he is.'

'Do you pay the men's passage home?' I inquired, a sudden thought striking me.

'If they want it,' said the clerk; 'sometimes they don't. But we paid the Kanaka's passage to Honolulu this morning; and by what Captain Trent was saying, I understand the rest are going home together.'

'Then you haven't paid them?' said I.

'Not yet,' said the clerk.

'And you would be a good deal surprised if I were to tell you they were gone already?' I asked.

'O, I should think you were mistaken,' said he.

'Such is the fact, however,' said I.

'I am sure you must be mistaken,' he repeated.

'May I use your telephone one moment?' asked Pinkerton; and as soon as permission had been granted, I heard him ring up the printing-office where our advertisements were usually handled. More I did not hear, for, suddenly recalling the big bad hand in the register of the What Cheer House, I asked the consulate clerk if he had a specimen of Captain Trent's writing. Whereupon I learned that the captain could not write, having cut his hand open a little before the loss of the brig; that the latter part of the log even had been written up by Mr. Goddedaal; and that Trent had always signed with his left hand. By the time I had gleaned this information Pinkerton was ready.

'That 's all that we can do. Now for the schooner,' said he; 'and by to-morrow evening I lay hands on Goddedaal, or my name 's not Pinkerton.'

'How have you managed?' I inquired.

'You 'll see before you get to bed,' said Pinkerton. 'And now, after all this backwarding and forwarding, and that hotel clerk, and that bug Bellairs, it 'll be a change and a kind of consolation to see the schooner. I guess things are humming there.'

But on the wharf, when we reached it, there was no sign of bustle, and, but for the galley smoke, no mark of life on the *Norah Creina*. Pinkerton's face grew pale and his mouth straightened as he leaped on board.

'Where 's the captain of this——?' and he left the phrase unfinished, finding no epithet sufficiently energetic for his thoughts.

It did not appear whom or what he was addressing; but a head, presumably the cook's, appeared in answer at the galley door.

'In the cabin, at dinner,' said the cook deliberately, chewing as he spoke.

'Is that cargo out?'

'No, sir.'

'None of it?'

'O, there 's some of it out. We 'll get at the rest of it livelier to-morrow, I guess.'

'I guess there 'll be something broken first,' said Pinkerton, and strode to the cabin.

Here we found a man, fat, dark, and quiet, seated gravely at what seemed a liberal meal. He looked up upon our entrance; and seeing Pinkerton continue to stand facing him in silence, hat on head, arms folded, and lips compressed, an expression of mingled wonder and annoyance began to dawn upon his placid face.

'Well!' said Jim; and so this is what you call rushing around?'

'Who are you?' cries the captain.

'Me! I 'm Pinkerton!' retorted Jim, as though the name had been a talisman.

'You 're not very civil, whoever you are,' was the reply. But still a certain effect had been produced, for he scrambled to his feet, and added hastily, 'A man must have a bit of dinner, you know, Mr. Pinkerton.'

'Where's your mate?' snapped Jim.

'He's up town,' returned the other.

'Up town!' sneered Pinkerton. 'Now, I'll tell you what you are—you're a Fraud; and if I wasn't afraid of dirtying my boot, I would kick you and your dinner into that dock.'

'I'll tell you something, too,' retorted the captain, duskily flushing. 'I wouldn't sail this ship for the man you are, if you went upon your knees. I've dealt with gentlemen up to now.'

'I can tell you the names of a number of gentlemen you'll never deal with any more, and that's the whole of Longhurst's gang,' said Jim. 'I'll put your pipe out in that quarter, my friend. Here, rout out your traps as quick as look at it, and take your vermin along with you. I'll have a captain in, this very night, that's a sailor, and some sailors to work for him.'

'I'll go when I please, and that's to-morrow morning,' cried the captain after us, as we departed for the shore.

'There's something gone wrong with the world to-day; it must have come bottom up!' wailed Pinkerton. 'Bellairs, and then the hotel clerk, and now this Fraud! And what am I to do for a captain, Loudon, with Longhurst gone home an hour ago and the boys all scattered?'

'I know,' said I; 'jump in!' And then to the driver: 'Do you know Black Tom's?'

Thither then we rattled, passed through the bar, and found (as I had hoped) Johnson in the enjoy-

ment of club life. The table had been thrust upon one side; a South Sea merchant was discoursing music from a mouth-organ in one corner; and in the middle of the floor Johnson and a fellow-seaman, their arms clasped about each other's bodies, somewhat heavily danced. The room was both cold and close; a jet of gas, which continually menaced the heads of the performers, shed a coarse illumination; the mouth-organ sounded shrill and dismal; and the faces of all concerned were church-like in their gravity. It were, of course, indelicate to interrupt these solemn frolics; so we edged ourselves to chairs, for all the world like belated comers in a concert-room, and patiently waited for the end. At length the organist, having exhausted his supply of breath, ceased abruptly in the middle of a bar. With the cessation of the strain the dancers likewise came to a full stop, swayed a moment, still embracing, and then separated, and looked about the circle for applause.

'Very well danced!' said one; but it appears the compliment was not strong enough for the performers, who (forgetful of the proverb) took up the tale in person.

'Well,' said Johnson, 'I mayn't be no sailor, but I can dance!'

And his late partner, with an almost pathetic conviction, added, 'My foot is as light as a feather.'

Seeing how the wind set, you may be sure I added a few words of praise before I carried Johnson alone into the passage: to whom, thus mollified, I

told so much as I judged needful of our situation, and begged him, if he would not take the job himself, to find me a smart man.

'Me!' he cried; 'I couldn't no more do it than I could try to go to hell!'

'I thought you were a mate?' said I.

'So I am a mate,' giggled Johnson, 'and you don't catch me shipping noways else. But I'll tell you what: I believe I can get you Arty Nares. You seen Arty; first-rate navigator, and a son of a gun for style.' And he proceeded to explain to me that Mr. Nares, who had the promise of a fine barque in six months, after things had quieted down, was in the meantime living very private, and would be pleased to have a change of air.

I called out Pinkerton and told him. 'Nares!' he cried, as soon as I had come to the name, 'I would jump at the chance of a man that had had Nares's trousers on! Why, Loudon, he's the smartest deep-water mate out of San Francisco, and draws his dividends regular in service and out.' This hearty indorsation clinched the proposal; Johnson agreed to produce Nares before six the following morning; and Black Tom, being called into the consultation, promised us four smart hands for the same hour, and even (what appeared to all of us excessive) promised them sober.

The streets were fully lighted when we left Black Tom's: street after street sparkling with gas or electricity, line after line of distant luminaries climbing the steep sides of hills towards the over-

vaulting darkness; and on the other hand, where the waters of the bay invisibly trembled, a hundred riding lanterns marked the position of a hundred ships. The sea-fog flew high in heaven; and at the level of man's life and business it was clear and chill. By silent consent we paid the hack off, and proceeded arm-in-arm towards the 'Poodle Dog' for dinner.

At one of the first hoardings I was aware of a bill-sticker at work: it was a late hour for this employment, and I checked Pinkerton until the sheet should be unfolded. This is what I read:—

TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD.

OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE

WRECKED BRIG 'FLYING SCUD'

APPLYING,

PERSONALLY OR BY LETTER,

AT THE OFFICE OF JAMES PINKERTON, MONTANA BLOCK,

BEFORE NOON TO-MORROW, TUESDAY, 12TH,

WILL RECEIVE

TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD.

'This is your idea, Pinkerton!' I cried.

'Yes. They've lost no time; I'll say that for them—not like the Fraud,' said he. 'But mind you, Loudon, that's not half of it. The cream of the idea's here: we know our man's sick; well, a copy of that has been mailed to every hospital, every doctor, and every drug-store in San Francisco.'

Of course, from the nature of our business, Pinkerton could do a thing of the kind at a figure

extremely reduced; for all that, I was appalled at the extravagance, and said so.

'What matter a few dollars now?' he replied sadly; 'it's in three months that the pull comes, Loudon.'

We walked on again in silence, not without a shiver. Even at the 'Poodle Dog' we took our food with small appetite and less speech; and it was not until he was warmed with a third glass of champagne that Pinkerton cleared his throat and looked upon me with a deprecating eye.

'Loudon,' said he, 'there was a subject you didn't wish to be referred to. I only want to do so indirectly. It wasn't'—he faltered—'it wasn't because you were dissatisfied with me?' he concluded, with a quaver.

'Pinkerton!' cried I.

'No, no, not a word just now,' he hastened to proceed; 'let me speak first. I appreciate, though I can't imitate, the delicacy of your nature; and I can well understand you would rather die than speak of it, and yet might feel disappointed. I did think I could have done better myself. But when I found how tight money was in this city, and a man like Douglas B. Longhurst—a forty-niner, the man that stood at bay in a corn patch for five hours against the San Diablo squatters—weakening on the operation, I tell you, Loudon, I began to despair; and —I may have made mistakes, no doubt there are thousands who could have done better—but I give you a loyal hand on it, I did my best.'

'My poor Jim,' said I, 'as if I ever doubted you! as if I didn't know you had done wonders! All day I've been admiring your energy and resource. And as for that affair——'

'No, Loudon, no more—not a word more! I don't want to hear,' cried Jim.

'Well, to tell you the truth, I don't want to tell you,' said I; 'for it's a thing I'm ashamed of.'

'Ashamed, Loudon? O, don't say that; don't use such an expression, even in jest!' protested Pinkerton.

'Do you never do anything you're ashamed of?' I inquired.

'No,' says he, rolling his eyes; 'why? I'm sometimes sorry afterwards, when it pans out different from what I figured. But I can't see what I would want to be ashamed for.'

I sat a while considering with admiration the simplicity of my friend's character. Then I sighed. 'Do you know, Jim, what I'm sorriest for?' said I. 'At this rate I can't be best man at your marriage.'

'My marriage!' he repeated, echoing the sigh. 'No marriage for me now. I'm going right down to-night to break it to her. I think that's what's shaken me all day. I feel as if I had had no right (after I was engaged) to operate so widely.'

'Well, you know, Jim, it was my doing, and you must lay the blame on me,' said I.

'Not a cent of it!' he cried. 'I was as eager as yourself, only not so bright at the beginning. No; I've myself to thank for it; but it's a wrench.'

While Jim departed on his dolorous mission, I returned alone to the office, lit the gas, and sat down to reflect on the events of that momentous day: on the strange features of the tale that had been so far unfolded, the disappearances, the terrors, the great sums of money; and on the dangerous and ungrateful task that awaited me in the immediate future.

It is difficult, in the retrospect of such affairs, to avoid attributing to ourselves in the past a measure of the knowledge we possess to-day. But I may say, and yet be well within the mark, that I was consumed that night with a fever of suspicion and curiosity; exhausted my fancy in solutions, which I still dismissed as incommensurable with the facts; and in the mystery by which I saw myself surrounded found a precious stimulus for my courage and a convenient soothing draught for conscience. Even had all been plain sailing, I do not hint that I should have drawn back. Smuggling is one of the meanest of crimes, for by that we rob a whole country *pro rata*, and are therefore certain to impoverish the poor: to smuggle opium is an offence particularly dark, since it stands related—not so much to murder, as to massacre. Upon all these points I was quite clear; my sympathy was all in arms against my interest; and had not Jim been involved, I could have dwelt almost with satisfaction on the idea of my failure. But Jim, his whole fortune, and his marriage depended upon my success; and I preferred the interests of my friend before those of all the islanders in the South Seas. This is

a poor, private morality, if you like; but it is mine, and the best I have; and I am not half so much ashamed of having embarked at all on this adventure, as I am proud that (while I was in it, and for the sake of my friend) I was up early and down late, set my own hand to everything, took dangers as they came, and for once in my life played the man throughout. At the same time I could have desired another field of energy; and I was the more grateful for the redeeming element of mystery. Without that, though I might have gone ahead and done as well, it would scarce have been with ardour; and what inspired me that night with an impatient greed of the sea, the island, and the wreck, was the hope that I might stumble there upon the answer to a hundred questions, and learn why Captain Trent fanned his red face in the exchange, and why Mr. Dickson fled from the telephone in the Mission Street lodging-house.

CHAPTER XI

IN WHICH JIM AND I TAKE DIFFERENT WAYS

I WAS unhappy when I closed my eyes; and it was to unhappiness that I opened them again next morning, to a confused sense of some calamity still inarticulate, and to the consciousness of jaded limbs and of a swimming head. I must have lain for some time inert and stupidly miserable before I became aware of a reiterated knocking at the door; with which discovery all my wits flowed back in their accustomed channels, and I remembered the sale and the wreck, and Goddedaal and Nares, and Johnson and Black Tom, and the troubles of yesterday and the manifold engagements of the day that was to come. The thought thrilled me like a trumpet in the hour of battle. In a moment I had leaped from bed, crossed the office where Pinkerton lay in a deep trance of sleep on the convertible sofa, and stood in the doorway, in my night gear, to receive our visitor.

Johnson was first, by way of usher, smiling. From a little behind, with his Sunday hat tilted forward

over his brow and a cigar glowing between his lips, Captain Nares acknowledged our previous acquaintance with a succinct nod. Behind him again, in the top of the stairway, a knot of sailors, the new crew of the *Norah Creina*, stood polishing the wall with back and elbow. These I left without to their reflections. But our two officers I carried at once into the office, where (taking Jim by the shoulder) I shook him slowly into consciousness. He sat up, all abroad for the moment, and stared on the new captain.

'Jim,' said I, 'this is Captain Nares. Captain, Mr. Pinkerton.'

Nares repeated his curt nod, still without speech; and I thought he held us both under a watchful scrutiny.

'O!' says Jim, 'this is Captain Nares, is it? Good-morning, Captain Nares. Happy to have the pleasure of your acquaintance, sir. I know you well by reputation.'

Perhaps, under the circumstances of the moment, this was scarce a welcome speech. At least, Nares received it with a grunt.

'Well, Captain,' Jim continued, 'you know about the size of the business? You 're to take the *Norah Creina* to Midway Island, break up a wreck, call at Honolulu, and back to this port? I suppose that 's understood?'

'Well,' returned Nares, with the same unamiable reserve, 'for a reason, which I guess you know, the cruise may suit me: but there 's a point or two to

settle. We shall have to talk, Mr. Pinkerton. But whether I go or not, somebody will. There 's no sense in losing time; and you might give Mr. Johnson a note, let him take the hands right down, and set to to overhaul the rigging. The beasts look sober,' he added, with an air of great disgust, 'and need putting to work to keep them so.'

This being agreed upon, Nares watched his subordinate depart, and drew a visible breath.

'And now we 're alone and can talk,' said he. 'What 's this thing about? It 's been advertised like Barnum's museum; that poster of yours has set the Front talking. That 's an objection in itself, for I 'm laying a little dark just now; and, anyway, before I take the ship, I require to know what I 'm going after.'

Thereupon Pinkerton gave him the whole tale, beginning with a business-like precision, and working himself up, as he went on, to the boiling-point of narrative enthusiasm. Nares sat and smoked, hat still on head, and acknowledged each fresh feature of the story with a frowning nod. But his pale blue eyes betrayed him, and lighted visibly.

'Now you see for yourself,' Pinkerton concluded; 'there 's every last chance that Trent has skipped to Honolulu, and it won't take much of that fifty thousand dollars to charter a smart schooner down to Midway. Here 's where I want a man!' cried Jim, with contagious energy. 'That wreck 's mine; I 've paid for it, money down; and if it 's got to be fought for, I want to see it fought for lively. If

you 're not back in ninety days, I tell you plainly I 'll make one of the biggest busts ever seen upon this coast. It 's life or death for Mr. Dodd and me. As like as not it 'll come to grapples on the island; and when I heard your name last night—and a blame' sight more this morning when I saw the eye you 've got in your head—I said, "Nares is good enough for me!" '

'I guess,' observed Nares, studying the ash of his cigar, 'the sooner I get that schooner outside the Farallones the better you 'll be pleased.'

'You 're the man I dreamed of!' cried Jim, bouncing on the bed. 'There 's not five per cent. of fraud in all your carcase.'

'Just hold on,' said Nares. 'There 's another point. I heard some talk about a supercargo.'

'That 's Mr. Dodd here, my partner,' said Jim.

'I don't see it,' returned the captain drily. 'One captain 's enough for any ship that ever I was aboard.'

'Now don't you start disappointing me,' said Pinkerton, 'for you 're talking without thought. I 'm not going to give you the run of the books of this firm, am I? I guess not. Well, this is not only a cruise, it 's a business operation, and that 's in the hands of my partner. You sail that ship, you see to breaking up that wreck and keeping the men upon the jump, and you 'll find your hands about full. Only, no mistake about one thing; it has to be done to Mr. Dodd's satisfaction, for it 's Mr. Dodd that 's paying.'

'I 'm accustomed to give satisfaction,' said Mr. Nares, with a dark flush.

'And so you will here!' cried Pinkerton. 'I understand you. You 're prickly to handle, but you 're straight all through.'

'The position 's got to be understood, though,' returned Nares, perhaps a trifle mollified. 'My position, I mean. I 'm not going to ship sailing-master; it 's enough out of my way already, to set a foot on this mosquito schooner.'

'Well, I 'll tell you,' retorted Jim, with an indescribable twinkle: 'you just meet me on the ballast, and we 'll make it a barquantine.'

Nares laughed a little; tactless Pinkerton had once more gained a victory in tact. 'Then there 's another point,' resumed the captain, tacitly relinquishing the last. 'How about the owners?'

'O, you leave that to me; I 'm one of Longhurst's crowd, you know,' said Jim, with sudden bristling vanity. 'Any man that 's good enough for me, is good enough for them.'

'Who are they?' asked Nares.

'M'Intyre and Spittal,' said Jim.

'O well, give me a card of yours,' said the captain; 'you needn't bother to write; I keep M'Intyre and Spittal in my vest-pocket.'

Boast for boast; it was always thus with Nares and Pinkerton—the two vainest men of my acquaintance. And having thus reinstated himself in his own opinion, the captain rose, and, with a couple of his stiff nods, departed.

'Jim,' I cried, as the door closed behind him, 'I don't like that man.'

'You 've just got to, Loudon,' returned Jim. 'He 's a typical American seaman—brave as a lion, full of resource, and stands high with his owners. He 's a man with a record.'

'For brutality at sea,' said I.

'Say what you like,' exclaimed Pinkerton, 'it was a good hour we got him in: I 'd trust Mamie's life to him to-morrow.'

'Well, and talking of Mamie?' says I.

Jim paused with his trousers half on. 'She 's the gallantest little soul God ever made!' he cried. 'Loudon, I 'd meant to knock you up last night, and I hope you won't take it unfriendly that I didn't. I went in and looked at you asleep; and I saw you were all broken up, and let you be. The news would keep, anyway; and even you, Loudon, couldn't feel it the same way as I did.'

'What news?' I asked.

'It 's this way,' says Jim. 'I told her how we stood, and that I backed down from marrying. "Are you tired of me?" says she: God bless her! Well, I explained the whole thing over again, the chance of smash, your absence unavoidable, the point I made of having you for the best man, and that. "If you 're not tired of me, I think I see one way to manage," says she. "Let 's get married to-morrow, and Mr. Loudon can be best man before he goes to sea." That 's how she said it, crisp and bright, like one of Dickens's characters. It was no good for me to talk

about the smash. "You 'll want me all the more," she said. Loudon, I only pray I can make it up to her; I prayed for it last night beside your bed, while you lay sleeping—for you, and Mamie and myself; and—I don't know if you quite believe in prayer, I 'm a bit Ingersollian myself—but a kind of sweetness came over me, and I couldn't help but think it was an answer. Never was a man so lucky! You and me and Mamie; it 's a triple cord, Loudon. If either of you were to die! And she likes you so much, and thinks you so accomplished and distingué-looking, and was just as set as I was to have you for best man. "Mr. Loudon," she calls you; seems to me so friendly! And she sat up till three in the morning fixing up a costume for the marriage; it did me good to see her, Loudon, and to see that needle going, going, and to say "All this hurry, Jim, is just to marry you!" I couldn't believe it; it was so like some blame' fairy story. To think of those old tin-type times about turned my head; I was so unrefined then, and so illiterate, and so lonesome; and here I am in clover, and I 'm blamed if I can see what I 've done to deserve it.'

So he poured forth with innocent volubility the fulness of his heart; and I, from these irregular communications, must pick out, here a little and there a little, the particulars of his new plan. They were to be married, sure enough, that day; the wedding breakfast was to be at Frank's; the evening to be passed in a visit of God-speed aboard the *Norah Creina*; and then we were to part, Jim and I

—he to his married life, I on my sea-enterprise. If ever I cherished an ill-feeling for Miss Mamie, I forgave her now; so brave and kind, so pretty and venturesome, was her decision. The weather frowned overhead with a leaden sky, and San Francisco had never (in all my experience) looked so bleak and gaunt, and shoddy and crazy, like a city prematurely old; but through all my wanderings and errands to and fro, by the dockside or in the jostling street, among rude sounds and ugly sights, there ran in my mind, like a tiny strain of music, the thought of my friend's happiness.

For that was indeed a day of many and incongruous occupations. Breakfast was scarce swallowed before Jim must run to the City Hall and Frank's about the cares of marriage, and I hurry to John Smith's upon the account of stores, and thence, on a visit of certification, to the *Norah Creina*. Methought she looked smaller than ever, sundry great ships overspiring her from close without. She was already a nightmare of disorder; and the wharf alongside was piled with a world of casks and cases and tins, and tools and coils of rope, and miniature barrels of giant powder, such as it seemed no human ingenuity could stuff on board of her. Johnson was in the waist, in a red shirt and dungaree trousers, his eye kindled with activity. With him I exchanged a word or two; thence stepped aft along the narrow alleyway between the house and the rail, and down the companion to the main cabin, where the captain sat with the commissioner at wine.

I gazed with disaffection at the little box which for many a day I was to call home. On the starboard was a stateroom for the captain; on the port a pair of frowsy berths, one over the other, and abutting astern upon the side of an unsavoury cupboard. The walls were yellow and damp, the floor black and greasy; there was a prodigious litter of straw, old newspapers, and broken packing-cases; and by way of ornament, only a glass-rack, a thermometer presented 'with compliments' of some advertising whisky-dealer, and a swinging lamp. It was hard to foresee that, before a week was up, I should regard that cabin as cheerful, lightsome, airy, and even spacious.

I was presented to the commissioner, and to a young friend of his whom he had brought with him for the purpose (apparently) of smoking cigars; and after we had pledged one another in a glass of California port, a trifle sweet and sticky for a morning beverage, the functionary spread his papers on the table, and the hands were summoned. Down they trooped, accordingly, into the cabin; and stood eyeing the ceiling or the floor, the picture of sheepish embarrassment, and with a common air of wanting to expectorate and not quite daring. In admirable contrast stood the Chinese cook, easy, dignified, set apart by spotless raiment, the hidalgo of the seas.

I daresay you never had occasion to assist at the farce which followed. Our shipping laws in the United States (thanks to the inimitable Dana) are conceived in a spirit of paternal stringency, and pro-

ceed throughout on the hypothesis that poor Jack is an imbecile, and the other parties to the contract, rogues and ruffians. A long and wordy paper of precautions, a fo'c's'le bill of rights, must be read separately to each man. I had now the benefit of hearing it five times in brisk succession; and you would suppose I was acquainted with its contents. But the commissioner (worthy man) spends his days in doing little else; and when we bear in mind the parallel case of the irreverent curate, we need not be surprised that he took the passage *tempo prestissimo*, in one roulade of gabble—that I, with the trained attention of an educated man, could gather but a fraction of its import—and the sailors nothing. No profanity in giving orders, no sheath-knives, Midway Island and any other port the master may direct, not to exceed six calendar months, and to this port to be paid off: so it seemed to run, with surprising verbiage; so ended. And with the end the commissioner, in each case, fetched a deep breath, resumed his natural voice, and proceeded to business. 'Now, my man,' he would say, 'you ship A. B. at so many dollars, American gold coin. Sign your name here, if you have one, and can write.' Whereupon, and the name (with infinite hard breathing) being signed, the commissioner would proceed to fill in the man's appearance, height, etc., on the official form. In this task of literary portraiture he seemed to rely wholly upon temperament; for I could not perceive him to cast one glance on any of his models. He was assisted, however, by a running commentary

from the captain: 'Hair blue and eyes red, nose five foot seven, and stature broken'—jests as old, presumably, as the American marine; and, like the similar pleasantries of the billiard board, perennially relished. The highest note of humour was reached in the case of the Chinese cook, who was shipped under the name of 'One Lung,' to the sound of his own protests and the self-approving chuckles of the functionary.

'Now, captain,' said the latter, when the men were gone, and he had bundled up his papers, 'the law requires you to carry a slop-chest and a chest of medicines.'

'I guess I know that,' said Nares.

'I guess you do,' returned the commissioner, and helped himself to port.

But when he was gone, I appealed to Nares on the same subject, for I was well aware we carried none of these provisions.

'Well,' drawled Nares, 'there's sixty pounds of niggerhead on the quay, isn't there? and twenty pounds of salts; and I never travel without some pain-killer in my gripsack.'

As a matter of fact, we were richer. The captain had the usual sailor's provision of quack medicines, with which, in the usual sailor fashion, he would daily drug himself, displaying an extreme inconstancy, and flitting from Kennedy's Red Discovery to Kennedy's White, and from Hood's Sarsaparilla to Mother Seigel's Syrup. And there were, besides, some mildewed and half-empty bottles, the labels

obliterated, over which Nares would sometimes sniff and speculate. 'Seems to smell like diarrhœa stuff,' he would remark. 'I wish't I knew, and I would try it.' But the slop-chest was indeed represented by the plugs of niggerhead, and nothing else. Thus paternal laws are made, thus they are evaded; and the schooner put to sea, like plenty of her neighbours, liable to a fine of six hundred dollars.

This characteristic scene, which has delayed me overlong, was but a moment in that day of exercise and agitation. To fit out a schooner for sea and improvise a marriage, between dawn and dusk, involves heroic effort. All day Jim and I ran and tramped, and laughed and came near crying, and fell in sudden anxious consultations, and were sped (with a prepared sarcasm on our lips) to some fallacious milliner, and made dashes to the schooner and John Smith's, and at every second corner were reminded (by our own huge posters) of our desperate estate. Between-whiles I had found the time to hover at some half a dozen jewellers' windows; and my present, thus intemperately chosen, was graciously accepted. I believe, indeed, that was the last (though not the least) of my concerns, before the old minister, shabby and benign, was routed from his house and led to the office like a performing poodle; and there, in the growing dusk, under the cold glitter of Thirteen Star, two hundred strong, and beside the garish glories of the agricultural engine, Mamie and Jim were made one. The scene was incongruous, but the business pretty, whimsical,

and affecting; the typewriters with such kindly faces and fine posies, Mamie so demure, and Jim—how shall I describe that poor, transfigured Jim? He began by taking the minister aside to the far end of the office. I knew not what he said, but I have reason to believe he was protesting his unfitness, for he wept as he said it; and the old minister, himself genuinely moved, was heard to console and encourage him, and at one time to use this expression: 'I assure you, Mr. Pinkerton, there are not many who can say so much'—from which I gathered that my friend had tempered his self-accusations with at least one legitimate boast. From this ghostly counselling, Jim turned to me; and though he never got beyond the explosive utterance of my name and one fierce handgrip, communicated some of his own emotion, like a charge of electricity, to his best man. We stood up to the ceremony at last, in a general and kindly discomposure. Jim was all abroad; and the divine himself betrayed his sympathy in voice and demeanour, and concluded with a fatherly allocution, in which he congratulated Mamie (calling her 'my dear') upon the fortune of an excellent husband, and protested he had rarely married a more interesting couple. At this stage, like a glory descending, there was handed in, *ex machinâ*, the card of Douglas B. Longhurst, with congratulations and four dozen Perrier-Jouet. A bottle was opened, and the minister pledged the bride, and the bridesmaids simpered and tasted, and I made a speech with airy bacchanalianism,

glass in hand. But poor Jim must leave the wine untasted. 'Don't touch it,' I had found the opportunity to whisper; 'in your state it will make you as drunk as a fiddler.' And Jim had wrung my hand with a 'God bless you, Loudon!—saved me again!'

Hard following upon this, the supper passed off at Frank's with somewhat tremulous gaiety; and thence, with one-half of the Perrier-Jouet—I would accept no more—we voyaged in a hack to the *Norah Creina*.

'What a dear little ship!' cried Mamie, as our miniature craft was pointed out to her; and then, on second thought, she turned to the best man. 'And how brave you must be, Mr. Dodd,' she cried, 'to go in that tiny thing so far upon the ocean!' And I perceived I had risen in the lady's estimation.

The 'dear little ship' presented a horrid picture of confusion, and its occupants of weariness and ill-humour. From the cabin the cook was storing tins into the lazarette, and the four hands, sweaty and sullen, were passing them from one to another from the waist. Johnson was three parts asleep over the table; and in his bunk, in his own cabin, the captain sourly chewed and puffed at a cigar.

'See here,' he said, rising; 'you'll be sorry you came. We can't stop work if we're to get away to-morrow. A ship getting ready for sea is no place for people, anyway. You'll only interrupt my men.'

I was on the point of answering something tart;

but Jim, who was acquainted with the breed, as he was with most things that had a bearing on affairs, made haste to pour in oil.

'Captain,' he said, 'I know we're a nuisance here, and that you've had a rough time. But all we want is that you should drink one glass of wine with us, Perrier-Jouet, from Longhurst, on the occasion of my marriage, and Loudon's—Mr. Dodd's—departure.'

'Well, it's your look-out,' said Nares. 'I don't mind half an hour. Spell, O!' he added to the men; 'go and kick your heels for half an hour, and then you can turn to again a trifle livelier. Johnson, see if you can't wipe off a chair for the lady.'

His tone was no more gracious than his language; but when Mamie had turned upon him the soft fire of her eyes, and informed him that he was the first sea-captain she had ever met, 'except captains of steamers, of course'—she so qualified the statement—and had expressed a lively sense of his courage, and perhaps implied (for I suppose the arts of ladies are the same as those of men) a modest consciousness of his good looks, our bear began insensibly to soften; and it was already part as an apology, though still with unaffected heat of temper, that he volunteered some sketch of his annoyances.

'A pretty mess we've had!' said he. 'Half the stores were wrong; I'll wring John Smith's neck for him some of these days. Then two newspaper beasts came down, and tried to raise copy out of me, till I threatened them with the first thing handy;

and then some kind of missionary bug, wanting to work his passage to Raiatea or somewhere. I told him I would take him off the wharf with the butt end of my boot, and he went away cursing. This vessel's been depreciated by the look of him.'

While the captain spoke, with his strange, humorous, arrogant abruptness, I observed Jim to be sizing him up, like a thing at once quaint and familiar, and with a scrutiny that was both curious and knowing.

'One word, dear boy,' he said, turning suddenly to me. And when he had drawn me on deck—'That man,' says he, 'will carry sail till your hair grows white; but never you let on—never breathe a word. I know his line: he'll die before he'll take advice; and if you get his back up, he'll run you right under. I don't often jam in my advice, Loudon; and when I do, it means I'm thoroughly posted.'

The little party in the cabin, so disastrously begun, finished, under the mellowing influence of wine and woman, in excellent feeling and with some hilarity. Mamie, in a plush Gainsborough hat and a gown of wine-coloured silk, sat, an apparent queen, among her rude surroundings and companions. The dusky litter of the cabin set off her radiant trimness: tarry Johnson was a foil to her fair beauty; she glowed in that poor place, fair as a star; until even I, who was not usually of her admirers, caught a spark of admiration; and even the captain, who was in no courtly humour, proposed that the scene should be

commemorated by my pencil. It was the last act of the evening. Hurriedly as I went about my task, the half-hour had lengthened out to more than three before it was completed: Mamie in full value, the rest of the party figuring in outline only, and the artist himself introduced in a back view, which was pronounced a likeness. But it was to Mamie that I devoted the best of my attention; and it was with her I made my chief success.

'O!' she cried, 'am I really like that? No wonder Jim . . .' She paused. 'Why, it's just as lovely as he's good!' she cried: an epigram which was appreciated, and repeated as we made our salutations, and called out after the retreating couple as they passed away under the lamplight on the wharf.'

Thus it was that our farewells were smuggled through under an ambuscade of laughter, and the parting over ere I knew it was begun. The figures vanished, the steps died away along the silent city front; on board, the men had returned to their labours, the captain to his solitary cigar; and after that long and complex day of business and emotion, I was at last alone and free. It was, perhaps, chiefly fatigue that made my heart so heavy. I leaned, at least, upon the house, and stared at the foggy heaven, or over the rail at the wavering reflection of the lamps, like a man that was quite done with hope and would have welcomed the asylum of the grave. And all at once, as I thus stood, the *City of Pekin* flashed into my mind, racing her thirteen knots for Honolulu, with the hated Trent—perhaps with

the mysterious Goddedaal—on board; and with the thought, the blood leaped and careered through all my body. It seemed no chase at all; it seemed we had no chance, as we lay there bound to iron pillars, and fooling away the precious moments over tins of beans. 'Let them get there first!' I thought. 'Let them! We can't be long behind.' And from that moment I date myself a man of a rounded experience: nothing had lacked but this—that I should entertain and welcome the grim thought of bloodshed.

It was long before the toil remitted in the cabin, and it was worth my while to get to bed; long after that, before sleep favoured me; and scarce a moment later (or so it seemed) when I was recalled to consciousness by bawling men and the jar of straining hawsers.

The schooner was cast off before I got on deck. In the misty obscurity of the first dawn I saw the tug heading us with glowing fires and blowing smoke, and heard her beat the roughened waters of the bay. Beside us, on her flock of hills, the lighted city towered up and stood swollen in the raw fog. It was strange to see her burn on thus wastefully, with half-quenched luminaries, when the dawn was already grown strong enough to show me, and to suffer me to recognise, a solitary figure standing by the piles.

Or was it really the eye, and not rather the heart, that identified that shadow in the dusk, among the shoreside lamps? I know not. It was Jim, at least;

Jim, come for a last look; and we had but time to wave a valedictory gesture and exchange a wordless cry. This was our second parting, and our capacities were now reversed. It was mine to play the Argonaut, to speed affairs, to plan and to accomplish—if need were, at the price of life; it was his to sit at home, to study the calendar, and to wait. I knew, besides, another thing that gave me joy—I knew that my friend had succeeded in my education; that the romance of business, if our fantastic purchase merited the name, had at last stirred my dilettante nature; and as we swept under cloudy Tamalpais and through the roaring narrows of the bay, the Yankee blood sang in my veins with suspense and exultation.

Outside the heads, as if to meet my desire, we found it blowing fresh from the north-east. No time had been lost. The sun was not yet up before the tug cast off the hawser, gave us a salute of three whistles, and turned homeward toward the coast, which now began to gleam along its margin with the earliest rays of day. There was no other ship in view when the *Norah Creina*, lying over under all plain sail, began her long and lonely voyage to the wreck.

CHAPTER XII

THE 'NORAH CREINA'

I LOVE to recall the glad monotony of a Pacific voyage, when the trades are not stinted, and the ship, day after day, goes free. The mountain scenery of trade-wind clouds, watched (and in my case painted) under every vicissitude of light—blotting stars, withering in the moon's glory, barring the scarlet eve, lying across the dawn collapsed into the unfeatured morning bank, or at noon raising their snowy summits between the blue roof of heaven and the blue floor of sea; the small, busy, and deliberate world of the schooner, with its unfamiliar scenes, the spearing of dolphin from the bowsprit end, the holy war on sharks, the cook making bread on the main hatch; reefing down before a violent squall, with the men hanging out on the foot-ropes; the squall itself, the catch at the heart, the opened sluices of the sky; and the relief, the renewed loveliness of life, when all is over, the sun forth again, and our out-fought enemy only a blot upon the leeward sea. I love to recall, and would that I

could reproduce that life, the unforgettable, the unrememberable. The memory, which shows so wise a backwardness in registering pain, is besides an imperfect recorder of extended pleasures; and a long-continued wellbeing escapes (as it were, by its mass) our petty methods of commemoration. On a part of our life's map there lies a roseate, undecipherable haze, and that is all.

Of one thing, if I am at all to trust my own annals, I was delightedly conscious. Day after day, in the sun-gilded cabin, the whisky-dealer's thermometer stood at 84°. Day after day the air had the same indescribable liveliness and sweetness, soft and nimble, and cool as the cheek of health. Day after day the sun flamed; night after night the moon beaconed, or the stars paraded their lustrous regiment. I was aware of a spiritual change, or, perhaps, rather a molecular reconstitution. My bones were sweeter to me. I had come home to my own climate, and looked back with pity on those damp and wintry zones miscalled the temperate.

'Two years of this, and comfortable quarters to live in, kind of shake the grit out of a man,' the captain remarked; 'can't make out to be happy anywhere else. A townie of mine was lost down this way, in a coalship that took fire at sea. He struck the beach somewhere in the Navigators; and he wrote to me that when he left the place it would be feet first. He 's well off, too, and his father owns some coasting craft Down East; but Billy prefers the beach, and hot rolls off the bread-fruit trees.'

A voice told me I was on the same track as Billy. But when was this? Our outward track in the *Norah Creina* lay well to the northward; and perhaps it is but the impression of a few pet days which I have unconsciously spread longer, or perhaps the feeling grew upon me later, in the run to Honolulu. One thing I am sure: it was before I had ever seen an island worthy of the name that I must date my loyalty to the South Seas. The blank sea itself grew desirable under such skies; and wherever the trade-wind blows I know no better country than a schooner's deck.

But for the tugging anxiety as to the journey's end, the journey itself must thus have counted for the best of holidays. My physical wellbeing was over-proof; effects of sea and sky kept me for ever busy with my pencil; and I had no lack of intellectual exercise of a different order in the study of my inconsistent friend, the captain. I call him friend, here on the threshold; but that is to look well ahead. At first I was too much horrified by what I considered his barbarities, too much puzzled by his shifting humours, and too frequently annoyed by his small vanities, to regard him otherwise than as the cross of my existence. It was only by degrees, in his rare hours of pleasantness, when he forgot (and made me forget) the weaknesses to which he was so prone, that he won me to a kind of unconsenting fondness. Lastly, the faults were all embraced in a more generous view; I saw them in their place, like discords in a musical progression; and accepted them

and found them picturesque, as we accept and admire, in the habitable face of nature, the smoky head of the volcano or the pernicious thicket of the swamp.

He was come of good people Down East, and had the beginnings of a thorough education. His temper had been ungovernable from the first; and it is likely the defect was inherited, and the blame of the rupture not entirely his. He ran away at least to sea; suffered horrible maltreatment, which seemed to have rather hardened than enlightened him; ran away again to shore in a South American port; proved his capacity and made money, although still a child; fell among thieves and was robbed; worked back a passage to the States, and knocked one morning at the door of an old lady whose orchard he had often robbed. The introduction appears insufficient; but Nares knew what he was doing. The sight of her old neighbourly depredator shivering at the door in tatters, the very oddity of his appeal, touched a soft spot in the spinster's heart. 'I always had a fancy for the old lady,' Nares said, 'even when she used to stampede me out of the orchard, and shake her thimble and her old curls at me out of the window as I was going by; I always thought she was a kind of pleasant old girl. Well, when she came to the door that morning, I told her so, and that I was stone-broke; and she took me right in, and fetched out the pie.' She clothed him, taught him, and had him to sea again in better shape, welcomed him to her hearth on his return from every cruise, and when she died bequeathed him her possessions. 'She was

a good old girl,' he would say; 'I tell you, Mr. Dodd, it was a queer thing to see me and the old lady talking a *pasear* in the garden, and the old man scowling at us over the pickets. She lived right next door to the old man, and I guess that's just what took me there. I wanted him to know that I was badly beat, you see, and would rather go to the devil than to him. What made the dig harder, he had quarrelled with the old lady about me and the orchard: I guess that made him rage. Yes, I was a beast when I was young; but I was always pretty good to the old lady.' Since then he had prospered, not uneventfully, in his profession; the old lady's money had fallen in during the voyage of the *Gleaner*, and he was now, as soon as the smoke of that engagement cleared away, secure of his ship. I suppose he was about thirty: a powerful, active man, with a blue eye, a thick head of hair, about the colour of oakum and growing low over the brow; clean-shaved and lean about the jaw; a good singer; a good performer on that sea-instrument, the accordion; a quick observer, a close reasoner; when he pleased, of a really elegant address; and when he chose, the greatest brute upon the seas.

His usage of the men, his hazing, his bullying, his perpetual fault-finding for no cause, his perpetual and brutal sarcasm, might have raised a mutiny in a slave-galley. Suppose the steersman's eye to have wandered; 'You ——, ——, little, mutton-faced Dutchman,' Nares would bawl, 'you want a booting to keep you on your course! I know a little city-

front slush when I see one. Just you glue your eye to that compass, or I 'll show you round the vessel at the butt-end of my boot.' Or suppose a hand to linger aft, whither he had perhaps been summoned not a minute before. 'Mr. Daniells, will you oblige me by stepping clear of that main-sheet?' the captain might begin, with truculent courtesy. 'Thank you. And perhaps you 'll be so kind as to tell me what the hell you 're doing on my quarter-deck? I want no dirt of your sort here. Is there nothing for you to do? Where 's the mate? Don't you set *me* to find work for you, or I 'll find you some that will keep you on your back a fortnight.' Such allocutions, conceived with a perfect knowledge of his audience, so that every insult carried home, were delivered with a mien so menacing, and an eye so fiercely cruel, that his unhappy subordinates shrank and quailed. Too often violence followed; too often I have heard and seen and boiled at the cowardly aggression; and the victim, his hands bound by law, has risen again from deck and crawled forward stupefied—I know not what passion of revenge in his wronged heart.

It seems strange I should have grown to like this tyrant. It may even seem strange that I should have stood by and suffered his excesses to proceed. But I was not quite such a chicken as to interfere in public, for I would rather have a man or two mishandled than one half of us butchered in a mutiny and the rest suffer on the gallows. And in private I was unceasing in my protests.

'Captain,' I once said to him, appealing to his

patriotism, which was of a hardy quality, 'this is no way to treat American seamen. You don't call it American to treat men like dogs?'

'Americans?' he said grimly. 'Do you call these Dutchmen and Scattermouches[1] Americans? I've been fourteen years to sea, all but one trip under American colours, and I've never laid eye on an American foremast hand. There used to be such things in the old days, when thirty-five dollars were the wages out of Boston; and then you could see ships handled and run the way they want to be. But that's all past and gone, and nowadays the only thing that flies in an American ship is a belaying-pin. You don't know, you haven't a guess. How would you like to go on deck for your middle watch, fourteen months on end, with all your duty to do, and every one's life depending on you, and expect to get a knife ripped into you as you come out of your state-room, or be sand-bagged as you pass the boat, or get tripped into the hold if the hatches are off in fine weather? That kind of shakes the starch out of the brotherly love and New Jerusalem business. You go through the mill, and you'll have a bigger grudge against every old shellback that dirties his plate in the three oceans than the Bank of California could settle up. No; it has an ugly look to it, but the only way to run a ship is to make yourself a terror.'

'Come, captain,' said I, 'there are degrees in

[1] In sea lingo (Pacific) *Dutchman* includes all Teutons and folk from the basin of the Baltic; *Scattermouch*, all Latins and Levantines.

everything. You know American ships have a bad name, you know perfectly well if it wasn't for the high wage and the good food, there 's not a man would ship in one if he could help; and even as it is, some prefer a British ship, beastly food and all.'

'O, the lime-juicers?' said he. 'There 's plenty booting in lime-juicers, I guess; though I don't deny but what some of them are soft.' And with that he smiled, like a man recalling something. 'Look here, that brings a yarn in my head,' he resumed, 'and for the sake of the joke I 'll give myself away. It was in 1874 I shipped mate in the British ship *Maria*, from 'Frisco for Melbourne. She was the queerest craft in some ways that ever I was aboard of. The food was a caution; there was nothing fit to put your lips to but the lime-juice, which was from the end bin no doubt; it used to make me sick to see the men's dinners, and sorry to see my own. The old man was good enough, I guess. Green was his name—a mild, fatherly old galoot. But the hands were the lowest gang I ever handled, and whenever I tried to knock a little spirit into them the old man took their part. It was Gilbert and Sullivan on the high seas; but you bet I wouldn't let any man dictate to me. "You give me your orders, Captain Green," I said, "and you 'll find I 'll carry them out; that 's all you 've got to say. You 'll find I do my duty," I said; "how I do it is my look-out, and there 's no man born that 's going to give me lessons." Well, there was plenty dirt on board that *Maria* first and last. Of course the old

man put my back up, and of course he put up the crew's, and I had to regular fight my way through every watch. The men got to hate me, so 's I would hear them grit their teeth when I came up. At last one day I saw a big hulking beast of a Dutchman booting the ship's boy. I made one shoot of it off the house and laid that Dutchman out. Up he came, and I laid him out again. "Now," I said, "if there 's a kick left in you, just mention it, and I 'll stamp your ribs in like a packing-case." He thought better of it, and never let on; lay there as mild as a deacon at a funeral, and they took him below to reflect on his native Dutchland. One night we got caught in rather a dirty thing about 25 south. I guess we were all asleep, for the first thing I knew there was the fore-royal gone. I ran forward, bawling blue hell; and just as I came by the foremast something struck me right through the forearm and stuck there. I put my other hand up, and, by George, it was the grain; the beasts had speared me like a porpoise. "Cap'n!" I cried. "What 's wrong?" says he. "They 've grained me," says I. "Grained you?" says he. "Well, I 've been looking for that." "And by God," I cried, "I want to have some of these beasts murdered for it!" "Now, Mr. Nares," says he, "you better go below. If I had been one of the men, you 'd have got more than this. And I want no more of your language on deck. You 've cost me my fore-royal already," says he; "and if you carry on, you 'll have the three sticks out of her.' That was old man Green's idea

of supporting officers. But you wait a bit; the cream 's coming. We made Melbourne right enough, and the old man said: "Mr. Nares, you and me don't draw together. You 're a first-rate seaman, no mistake of that; but you 're the most disagreeable man I ever sailed with, and your language and your conduct to the crew I cannot stomach. I guess we 'll separate." I didn't care about the berth, you may be sure; but I felt kind of mean, and if he made one kind of stink I thought I could make another. So I said I would go ashore and see how things stood; went, found I was all right, and came aboard again on the top rail. "Are you getting your traps together, Mr. Nares?" says the old man. "No," says I, "I don't know as we 'll separate much before 'Frisco—at least," I said, "it 's a point for your consideration. I 'm very willing to say good-bye to the *Maria*, but I don't know whether you 'll care to start me out with three months' wages." He got his money-box right away. "My son," says he, "I think it cheap at the money." He had me there.'

It was a singular tale for a man to tell of himself; above all, in the midst of our discussion; but it was quite in character for Nares. I never made a good hit in our disputes, I never justly resented any act or speech of his, but what I found it long after carefully posted in his day-book and reckoned (here was the man's oddity) to my credit. It was the same with his father, whom he had hated; he would give a sketch of the old fellow, frank and credible, and yet so honestly touched that it was charming. I have

never met a man so strangely constituted: to possess a reason of the most equal justice, to have his nerves at the same time quivering with petty spite, and to act upon the nerves and not the reason.

A kindred wonder in my eyes was the nature of his courage. There was never a braver man: he went out to welcome danger; an emergency (came it never so sudden) stung him like a tonic. And yet, upon the other hand, I have known none so nervous, so oppressed with possibilities, looking upon the world at large, and the life of a sailor in particular, with so constant and haggard a consideration of the ugly chances. All his courage was in blood, not merely cold, but icy with reasoned apprehension. He would lay our little craft rail under, and 'hang on' in a squall, until I gave myself up for lost, and the men were rushing to their stations of their own accord. 'There,' he would say, 'I guess there 's not a man on board would have hung on as long as I did that time: they 'll have to give up thinking me no schooner sailor. I guess I can shave just as near capsizing as any other captain of this vessel, drunk or sober.' And then he would fall to repining and wishing himself well out of the enterprise, and dilate on the peril of the seas, the particular dangers of the schooner rig, which he abhorred, the various ways in which we might go to the bottom, and the prodigious fleet of ships that have sailed out in the course of history, dwindled from the eyes of watchers, and returned no more. 'Well,' he would wind up, 'I guess it don't much

matter. I can't see what any one wants to live for, anyway. If I could get into some one else's apple-tree, and be about twelve years old, and just stick the way I was, eating stolen apples, I won't say. But there 's no sense in this grown-up business—sailorising, politics, the piety mill, and all the rest of it. Good clean drowning is good enough for me.' It is hard to imagine any more depressing talk for a poor landsman on a dirty night; it is hard to imagine anything less sailor-like (as sailors are supposed to be, and generally are) than this persistent harping on the minor.

But I was to see more of the man's gloomy constancy ere the cruise was at an end.

On the morning of the seventeenth day I came on deck, to find the schooner under double reefs, and flying rather wild before a heavy run of sea. Snoring trades and humming sails had been our portion hitherto. We were already nearing the island. My restrained excitement had begun again to overmaster me; and for some time my only book had been the patent log that trailed over the taffrail, and my chief interest the daily observation and our caterpillar progress across the chart. My first glance, which was at the compass, and my second, which was at the log, were all that I could wish. We lay our course; we had been doing over eight since nine the night before, and I drew a heavy breath of satisfaction. And then I know not what odd and wintry appearance of the sea and sky knocked suddenly at my heart. I observed the schooner to look more

than usually small, the men silent and studious of the weather. Nares, in one of his rusty humours, afforded me no shadow of a morning salutation. He, too, seemed to observe the behaviour of the ship with an intent and anxious scrutiny. What I liked still less, Johnson himself was at the wheel, which he span busily, often with a visible effort; and as the seas ranged up behind us, black and imminent, he kept casting behind him eyes of animal swiftness, and drawing in his neck between his shoulders, like a man dodging a blow. From these signs I gathered that all was not exactly for the best; and I would have given a good handful of dollars for a plain answer to the questions which I dared not put. Had I dared, with the present danger-signal in the captain's face, I should only have been reminded of my position as supercargo —an office never touched upon in kindness—and advised, in a very indigestible manner, to go below. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to entertain my vague apprehensions as best I should be able, until it pleased the captain to enlighten me of his own accord. This he did sooner than I had expected —as soon, indeed, as the Chinaman had summoned us to breakfast, and we sat face to face across the narrow board.

'See here, Mr. Dodd,' he began, looking at me rather queerly, 'here is a business point arisen. This sea's been running up for the last two days, and now it's too high for comfort. The glass is falling, the wind is breezing up, and I won't say but what

there 's dirt in it. If I lay her to, we may have to ride out a gale of wind, and drift God knows where —on these French Frigate Shoals, for instance. If I keep her as she goes, we 'll make that island to-morrow afternoon, and have the lee of it to lie under, if we can't make out to run in. The point you have to figure on, is whether you 'll take the big chances of that Captain Trent making the place before you, or take the risk of something happening. I 'm to run this ship to your satisfaction,' he added, with an ugly sneer. 'Well, here 's a point for the supercargo.'

'Captain,' I returned, with my heart in my mouth, 'risk is better than certain failure.'

'Life is all risk, Mr. Dodd,' he remarked. 'But there 's one thing: it 's now or never; in half an hour Archdeacon Gabriel couldn't lay her to, if he came down-stairs on purpose.'

'All right,' said I; 'let 's run.'

'Run goes,' said he; and with that he fell to breakfast, and passed half an hour in stowing away pie, and devoutly wishing himself back in San Francisco.

When we came on deck again, he took the wheel from Johnson—it appears they could trust none among the hands—and I stood close beside him, feeling safe in this proximity, and tasting a fearful joy from our surroundings and the consciousness of my decision. The breeze had already risen, and as it tore over our heads, it uttered at times a long hooting note that sent my heart into my boots.

The sea pursued us without remission, leaping to the assault of the low rail. The quarter-deck was all awash, and we must close the companion doors.

'And all this, if you please, for Mr. Pinkerton's dollars!' the captain suddenly exclaimed. 'There's many a fine fellow gone under, Mr. Dodd, because of drivers like your friend. What do they care for a ship or two? Insured, I guess. What do they care for sailors' lives alongside of a few thousand dollars? What they want is speed between ports, and a damned fool of a captain that'll drive a ship under as I'm doing this one. You can put in the morning, asking why I do it.'

I sheered off to another part of the vessel as fast as civility permitted. This was not at all the talk that I desired, nor was the train of reflection which it started anyway welcome. Here I was, running some hazard of my life, and perilling the lives of seven others; exactly for what end, I was now at liberty to ask myself. For a very large amount of a very deadly poison, was the obvious answer; and I thought if all tales were true, and I were soon to be subjected to cross-examination at the bar of Eternal Justice, it was one which would not increase my popularity with the court. 'Well, never mind, Jim,' thought I; 'I'm doing it for you.'

Before eleven a third reef was taken in the main-sail, and Johnson filled the cabin with a storm-sail of No. 1 duck, and sat cross-legged on the streaming floor, vigorously putting it to rights with a couple of the hands. By dinner I had fled the deck, and

sat in the bench corner, giddy, dumb, and stupefied with terror. The frightened leaps of the poor *Norah Creina*, spanking like a stag for bare existence, bruised me between the table and the berths. Overhead, the wild huntsman of the storm passed continuously in one blare of mingled noises; screaming wind, straining timber, lashing rope's-end, pounding block and bursting sea contributed; and I could have thought there was at times another, a more piercing, a more human note, that dominated all, like the wailing of an angel; I could have thought I knew the angel's name, and that his wings were black. It seemed incredible that any creature of man's art could long endure the barbarous mishandling of the seas, kicked as the schooner was from mountain-side to mountain-side, beaten and blown upon and wrenched in every joint and sinew, like a child upon the rack. There was not a plank of her that did not cry aloud for mercy; and as she continued to hold together, I became conscious of a growing sympathy with her endeavours, a growing admiration for her gallant staunchness, that amused and at times obliterated my terrors for myself. God bless every man that swung a mallet on that tiny and strong hull! It was not for wages only that he laboured, but to save men's lives.

All the rest of the day, and all the following night, I sat in the corner or lay wakeful in my bunk; and it was only with the return of morning that a new phase of my alarms drove me once more on deck. A gloomier interval I never passed. Johnson and

Nares steadily relieved each other at the wheel and came below. The first glance of each was at the glass, which he repeatedly knuckled and frowned upon; for it was sagging lower all the time. Then, if Johnson were the visitor, he would pick a snack out of the cupboard, and stand, braced against the table, eating it, and perhaps obliging me with a word or two of his hee-haw conversation: how it was 'a son of a gun of a cold night on deck, Mr. Dodd' (with a grin); how 'it wasn't no night for panjammers, he could tell me'; having transacted all which, he would throw himself down in his bunk and sleep his two hours with compunction. But the captain neither ate nor slept. 'You there, Mr. Dodd?' he would say, after the obligatory visit to the glass. 'Well, my son, we're one hundred and four miles' (or whatever it was) 'off the island, and scudding for all we're worth. We'll make it to-morrow about four, or not, as the case may be. That's the news. And now, Mr. Dodd, I've stretched a point for you; you can see I'm dead tired; so just you stretch away back to your bunk again.' And with this attempt at geniality, his teeth would settle hard down on his cigar, and he would pass his spell below staring and blinking at the cabin lamp through a cloud of tobacco-smoke. He has told me since that he was happy, which I should never have divined. 'You see,' he said, 'the wind we had was never anything out of the way; but the sea was really nasty, the schooner wanted a lot of humouring, and it was clear from the glass that we were close to

some dirt. We might be running out of it, or we might be running right crack into it. Well, there 's always something sublime about a big deal like that; and it kind of raises a man in his own liking. We 're a queer kind of beasts, Mr. Dodd.'

The morning broke with sinister brightness; the air alarmingly transparent, the sky pure, the rim of the horizon clear and strong against the heavens. The wind and the wild seas, now vastly swollen, indefatigably hunted us. I stood on deck, choking with fear; I seemed to lose all power upon my limbs; my knees were as paper when she plunged into the murderous valleys; my heart collapsed when some black mountain fell in avalanche beside her counter, and the water, that was more than spray, swept round my ankles like a torrent. I was conscious of but one strong desire—to bear myself decently in my terrors, and, whatever should happen to my life, preserve my character: as the captain said, we are a queer kind of beasts. Breakfast-time came, and I made shift to swallow some hot tea. Then I must stagger below to take the time, reading the chronometer with dizzy eyes, and marvelling the while what value there could be in observations taken in a ship launched (as ours then was) like a missile among flying seas. The forenoon dragged on in a grinding monotony of peril; every spoke of the wheel a rash but an obliged experiment—rash as a forlorn hope, needful as the leap that lands a fireman from a burning staircase. Noon was made; the captain dined on his day's work, and I on

watching him; and our place was entered on the chart with a meticulous precision which seemed to me half pitiful and half absurd, since the next eye to behold that sheet of paper might be the eye of an exploring fish. One o'clock came, then two; the captain gloomed and chafed, as he held to the coaming of the house, and if ever I saw dormant murder in man's eye, it was in his. God help the hand that should have disobeyed him!

Of a sudden he turned towards the mate, who was doing his trick at the wheel.

'Two points on the port bow,' I heard him say; and he took the wheel himself.

Johnson nodded, wiped his eyes with the back of his wet hand, watched a chance as the vessel lunged up hill, and got to the main rigging, where he swarmed aloft. Up and up I watched him go, hanging on at every ugly plunge, gaining with every lull of the schooner's movement, until, clambering into the cross-trees and clinging with one arm around the masts, I could see him take one comprehensive sweep of the south-westerly horizon. The next moment he had slid down the backstay and stood on deck, with a grin, a nod, and a gesture of the finger that said 'yes'; the next again, and he was back sweating and squirming at the wheel, his tired face streaming and smiling, and his hair and the rags and corners of his clothes lashing round him in the wind.

Nares went below, fetched up his binocular, and fell into a silent perusal of the sea-line: I also, with

my unaided eyesight. Little by little, in that white waste of water, I began to make out a quarter where the whiteness appeared more condensed: the sky above was whitish likewise, and misty like a squall; and little by little there thrilled upon my ears a note deeper and more terrible than the yelling of the gale —the long thundering roll of breakers. Nares wiped his night-glass on his sleeve and passed it to me, motioning, as he did so, with his hand. An endless wilderness of raging billows came and went and danced in the circle of the glass; now and then a pale corner of sky, or the strong line of the horizon rugged with the heads of waves; and then of a sudden—come and gone ere I could fix it, with a swallow's swiftness—one glimpse of what we had come so far and paid so dear to see; the masts and rigging of a brig pencilled on heaven, with an ensign streaming at the main, and the ragged ribbons of a topsail thrashing from the yard. Again and again, with toilful searching, I recalled that apparition. There was no sign of any land; the wreck stood between sea and sky, a thing the most isolated I had ever viewed; but as we drew nearer, I perceived her to be defended by a line of breakers which drew off on either hand, and marked, indeed, the nearest segment of the reef. Heavy spray hung over them like a smoke, some hundred feet into the air; and the sound of their consecutive explosions rolled like a cannonade.

In half an hour we were close in; for perhaps as long again we skirted that formidable barrier toward

its farther side; and presently the sea began insensibly to moderate and the ship to go more sweetly. We had gained the lee of the island, as (for form's sake) I may call that ring of foam and haze and thunder; and shaking out a reef, wore ship and headed for the passage.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ISLAND AND THE WRECK

All hands were filled with joy. It was betrayed in their alacrity and easy faces: Johnson smiling broadly at the wheel, Nares studying the sketch chart of the island with an eye at peace, and the hands clustered forward, eagerly talking and pointing: so manifest was our escape, so wonderful the attraction of a single foot of earth after so many suns had set and risen on an empty sea! To add to the relief, besides, by one of those malicious coincidences which suggest for Fate the image of an underbred and grinning schoolboy, we had no sooner worn ship than the wind began to abate.

For myself, however, I did but exchange anxieties. I was no sooner out of one fear than I fell upon another; no sooner secure that I should myself make the intended haven, than I began to be convinced that Trent was there before me. I climbed into the rigging, stood on the board, and eagerly scanned that ring of coral reef and bursting breaker, and the blue lagoon which they enclosed. The two islets within

began to show plainly—Middle Brooks and Lower Brooks Island, the Directory named them: two low, bush-covered, rolling strips of sand, each with glittering beaches, each perhaps a mile or a mile and a half in length, running east and west, and divided by a narrow channel. Over these, innumerable as maggots, there hovered, chattered, and screamed millions of twinkling sea-birds; white and black; the black by far the largest. With singular scintillations, this vortex of winged life swayed to and fro in the strong sunshine, whirled continually through itself, and would now and again burst asunder and scatter as wide as the lagoon: so that I was irresistibly reminded of what I had read of nebular convulsions. A thin cloud overspread the area of the reef and the adjacent sea—the dust, as I could not but fancy, of earlier explosions. And, a little apart, there was yet another focus of centrifugal and centripetal flight, where, hard by the deafening line of breakers, her sails (all but the tattered topsail) snugly furled down, and the red rag that marks Old England on the seas beating, union down, at the main—the *Flying Scud*, the fruit of so many toilers, a recollection in so many lives of men, whose tall spars had been mirrored in the remotest corners of the sea—lay stationary at last and for ever, in the first stage of naval dissolution. Towards her the taut *Norah Creina*, vulture-wise, wriggled to windward: come from so far to pick her bones. And, look as I pleased, there was no other presence of man or of man's handiwork; no Honolulu schooner

lay there crowded with armed rivals, no smoke rose from the fire at which I fancied Trent cooking a meal of sea-birds. It seemed, after all, we were in time, and I drew a mighty breath.

I had not arrived at this reviving certainty before the breakers were already close aboard, the leadsman at his station, and the captain posted in the fore cross-trees to con us through the coral lumps of the lagoon. All circumstances were in our favour, the light behind, the sun low, the wind still fresh and steady, and the tide about the turn. A moment later we shot at racing speed betwixt two pier heads of broken water; the lead began to be cast, the captain to bawl down his anxious directions, the schooner to tack and dodge among the scattered dangers of the lagoon; and at one bell in the first dog-watch we had come to our anchor off the north-east end of Middle Brooks Island, in five fathoms water. The sails were gasketed and covered, the boats emptied of the miscellaneous stores and odds and ends of sea-furniture, that accumulate in the course of a voyage, the kedge sent ashore, and the decks tidied down: a good three-quarters of an hour's work, during which I raged about the deck like a man with a strong toothache. The transition from the wild sea to the comparative immobility of the lagoon had wrought strange distress among my nerves: I could not hold still whether in hand or foot; the slowness of the men, tired as dogs after our rough experience outside, irritated me like something personal; and the irrational screaming of the

sea-birds saddened me like a dirge. It was a relief when, with Nares, and a couple of hands, I might drop into the boat and move off at last for the *Flying Scud.*

'She looks kind of pitiful, don't she?' observed the captain, nodding towards the wreck, from which we were separated by some half a mile. 'Looks as if she didn't like her berth, and Captain Trent had used her badly.—Give her ginger, boys,' he added to the hands, 'and you can all have shore liberty to-night to see the birds and paint the town red.'

We all laughed at the pleasantry, and the boat skimmed the faster over the rippling face of the lagoon. The *Flying Scud* would have seemed small enough beside the wharves of San Francisco, but she was some thrice the size of the *Norah Creina,* which had been so long our continent; and as we craned up at her wall-sides, she impressed us with a mountain magnitude. She lay head to the reef, where the huge blue wall of the rollers was for ever ranging up and crumbling down; and to gain her starboard side, we must pass below the stern. The rudder was hard aport, and we could read the legend—

FLYING SCUD

HULL.

On the other side, about the break of the poop, some half a fathom of rope-ladder trailed over the rail, and by this we made our entrance.

She was a roomy ship inside, with a raised poop standing some three feet higher than the deck, and a

small forward house, for the men's bunks and the galley, just abaft the foremast. There was one boat on the house, and another and larger one, in beds on deck, on either hand of it. She had been painted white, with tropical economy, outside and in; and we found, later on, that the stanchions of the rail, hoops of the scuttle-butt, etc., were picked out with green. At that time, however, when we first stepped aboard, all was hidden under the droppings of innumerable sea-birds.

The birds themselves gyrated and screamed meanwhile among the rigging; and when we looked into the galley, their outrush drove us back. Savage-looking fowl they were, savagely beaked, and some of the black ones great as eagles. Half-buried in the slush, we were aware of a litter of kegs in the waist; and these, on being somewhat cleaned, proved to be water-beakers and quarter-casks of mess beef with some colonial brand, doubtless collected there before the *Tempest* hove in sight, and while Trent and his men had no better expectation than to strike for Honolulu in the boats. Nothing else was notable on deck, save where the loose topsail had played some havoc with the rigging, and there hung, and swayed, and sang in the declining wind, a raffle of intorted cordage.

With a shyness that was almost awe, Nares and I descended the companion. The stair turned upon itself and landed us just forward of a thwart-ship bulkhead that cut the poop in two. The fore part formed a kind of miscellaneous store-room, with a

double-bunked division for the cook (as Nares supposed) and second mate. The after part contained, in the midst, the main cabin, running in a kind of bow into the curvature of the stern; on the port side, a pantry opening forward and a state-room for the mate; and on the starboard, the captain's berth and water-closet. Into these we did but glance, the main cabin holding us. It was dark, for the sea-birds had obscured the skylight with their droppings; it smelt rank and fusty: and it was beset with a loud swarm of flies that beat continually in our faces. Supposing them close attendants upon man and his broken meat, I marvelled how they had found their way to Midway Reef; it was sure at least some vessel must have brought them, and that long ago, for they had multiplied exceedingly. Part of the floor was strewn with a confusion of clothes, books, nautical instruments, odds and ends of finery, and such trash as might be expected from the turning out of several seamen's chests, upon a sudden emergency, and after a long cruise. It was strange in that dim cabin, quivering with the near thunder of the breakers, and pierced with the screaming of the fowls, to turn over so many things that other men had coveted, and prized, and worn on their warm bodies—frayed old underclothing, pyjamas of strange design, duck suits in every stage of rustiness, oil-skins, pilot coats, embroidered shirts, jackets of Ponjee silk—clothes for the night watch at sea or the day ashore in the hotel verandah: and mingled among these, books, cigars, bottles of scent, fancy

pipes, quantities of tobacco, many keys, a rusty pistol, and a sprinkling of cheap curiosities—Benares brass, Chinese jars and pictures, and bottles of odd shells in cotton, each designed, no doubt, for somebody at home—perhaps in Hull, of which Trent had been a native and his ship a citizen.

Thence we turned our attention to the table, which stood spread, as if for a meal, with stout ship's crockery and the remains of food—a pot of marmalade, dregs of coffee in the mugs, unrecognisable remains of food, bread, some toast, and a tin of condensed milk. The table-cloth, originally of a red colour, was stained a dark brown at the captain's end, apparently with coffee; at the other end it had been folded back, and a pen and ink-pot stood on the bare table. Stools were here and there about the table, irregularly placed, as though the meal had been finished and the men smoking and chatting; and one of the stools lay on the floor, broken.

'See! they were writing up the log,' said Nares, pointing to the ink-bottle. 'Caught napping, as usual. I wonder if there ever was a captain yet that lost a ship with his log-book up to date? He generally has about a month to fill up on a clean break, like Charles Dickens and his serial novels.—What a regular limejuicer spread!' he added contemptuously. 'Marmalade—and toast for the old man! Nasty slovenly pigs!'

There was something in this criticism of the absent that jarred upon my feelings. I had no love indeed for Captain Trent or any of his vanished gang; but

the desertion and decay of this once habitable cabin struck me hard. The death of man's handiwork is melancholy, like the death of man himself; and I was impressed with an involuntary and irrational sense of tragedy in my surroundings.

'This sickens me,' I said; 'let's go on deck and breathe.'

The captain nodded. 'It *is* kind of lonely, isn't it?' he said; 'but I can't go up till I get the code signals. I want to run up "Got Left" or something, just to brighten up this island home. Captain Trent hasn't been here yet, but he'll drop in before long; and it'll cheer him up to see a signal on the brig.'

'Isn't there some official expression we could use?' I asked, vastly taken by the fancy. '"Sold for the benefit of the underwriters: for further particulars apply to J. Pinkerton, Montana Block, S.F."'

'Well,' returned Nares, 'I won't say but what an old navy quartermaster might telegraph all that, if you gave him a day to do it in and a pound of tobacco for himself. But it's above my register. I must try something short and sweet: KB, urgent signal, "Heave all aback"; or LM, urgent, "The berth you're now in is not safe"; or what do you say to PQH?—"Tell my owners the ship answers remarkably well."'

'It's premature,' I replied; 'but it seems calculated to give pain to Trent. PQH for me.'

The flags were found in Trent's cabin, neatly stored behind a lettered grating; Nares chose what he required, and (I following) returned on deck,

where the sun had already dipped, and the dusk was coming.

'Here! don't touch that, you fool!' shouted the captain to one of the hands, who was drinking from the scuttle-butt. 'That water 's rotten!'

'Beg pardon, sir,' replied the man. 'Tastes quite sweet.'

'Let me see,' returned Nares, and he took the dipper and held it to his lips. 'Yes, it 's all right,' he said. 'Must have rotted and come sweet again. —Queer, isn't it, Mr. Dodd? Though I 've known the same on a Cape Horner.'

There was something in his intonation that made me look him in the face; he stood a little on tiptoe to look right and left about the ship, like a man filled with curiosity, and his whole expression and bearing testified to some suppressed excitement.

'You don't believe what you 're saying!' I broke out.

'O, I don't know but what I do!' he replied, laying a hand upon me soothingly. 'The thing 's very possible. Only, I 'm bothered about something else.'

And with that he called a hand, gave him the code flags, and stepped himself to the main signal halliards, which vibrated under the weight of the ensign overhead. A minute later, the American colours, which we had brought in the boat, replaced the English red, and PQH was fluttering at the fore.

'Now, then,' said Nares, who had watched the

breaking out of his signal with the old-maidish particularity of an American sailor, 'out with those handspikes, and let 's see what water there is in the lagoon.'

The bars were shoved home; the barbarous cacophony of the clanking pump rose in the waist; and streams of ill-smelling water gushed on deck and made valleys in the slab guano. Nares leaned on the rail, watching the steady stream of bilge as though he found some interest in it.

'What is it that bothers you?' I asked.

'Well, I 'll tell you one thing shortly,' he replied. 'But here 's another. Do you see those boats there, one on the house and two on the beds? Well, where is the boat Trent lowered when he lost the hands?'

'Got it aboard again, I suppose,' said I.

'Well, if you 'll tell me why!' returned the captain.

'Then it must have been another,' I suggested.

'She might have carried another on the main hatch, I won't deny,' admitted Nares, 'but I can't see what she wanted with it, unless it was for the old man to go out and play the accordion in on moonlight nights.'

'It can't much matter, anyway,' I reflected.

'O, I don't suppose it does,' said he, glancing over his shoulder at the spouting of the scuppers.

'And how long are we to keep up this racket?' I asked. 'We 're simply pumping up the lagoon. Captain Trent himself said she had settled down and was full forward.'

'Did he?' said Nares, with a significant dryness. And almost as he spoke the pumps sucked, and sucked again, and the men threw down their bars. 'There, what do you make of that?' he asked. 'Now, I'll tell, Mr. Dodd,' he went on, lowering his voice, but not shifting from his easy attitude against the rail, 'this ship is as sound as the *Norah Creina*. I had a guess of it before we came aboard, and now I know.'

'It's not possible!' I cried. 'What do you make of Trent?'

'I don't make anything of Trent; I don't know whether he's a liar or only an old wife; I simply tell you what's the fact,' said Nares. 'And I'll tell you something more,' he added: 'I've taken the ground myself in deep-water vessels; I know what I'm saying; and I say that, when she first struck and before she bedded down, seven or eight hours' work would have got this hooker off, and there's no man that ever went two years to sea but must have known it.'

I could only utter an exclamation.

Nares raised his finger warningly. 'Don't let *them* get hold of it,' said he. 'Think what you like, but say nothing.'

I glanced round; the dusk was melting into early night; the twinkle of a lantern marked the schooner's position in the distance; and our men, free from further labour, stood grouped together in the waist, their faces illuminated by their glowing pipes.

'Why didn't Trent get her off?' inquired the captain. 'Why did he want to buy her back in 'Frisco for these fabulous sums, when he might have sailed her into the bay himself?'

'Perhaps he never knew her value until then,' I suggested.

'I wish we knew her value now,' exclaimed Nares. 'However, I don't want to depress you; I 'm sorry for you, Mr. Dodd; I know how bothering it must be to you, and the best I can say 's this: I haven't taken much time getting down, and now I 'm here I mean to work this thing in proper style. I just want to put your mind at rest; you shall have no trouble with me.'

There was something trusty and friendly in his voice; and I found myself gripping hands with him, in that hard, short shake that means so much with English-speaking people.

'We 'll do, old fellow,' said he. 'We 've shaken down into pretty good friends, you and me; and you won't find me working the business any the less hard for that. And now let 's scoot for supper.'

After supper, with the idle curiosity of the seafarer, we pulled ashore in a fine moonlight, and landed on Middle Brooks Island. A flat beach surrounded it upon all sides; and the midst was occupied by a thicket of bushes, the highest of them scarcely five feet high, in which the sea-fowl lived. Through this we tried at first to strike; but it were easier to cross Trafalgar Square on a day of demonstration than to invade these haunts of sleeping

sea-birds. The nests sank, and the eggs burst under footing; wings beat in our faces, beaks menaced our eyes, our minds were confounded with the screeching, and the coil spread over the island and mounted high into the air.

'I guess we'll saunter round the beach,' said Nares, when we had made good our retreat.

The hands were all busy after sea-birds' eggs, so there were none to follow us. Our way lay on the crisp sand by the margin of the water: on one side, the thicket from which we had been dislodged; on the other, the face of the lagoon, barred with a broad path of moonlight, and beyond that the line, alternately dark and shining, alternately hove high and fallen prone, of the external breakers. The beach was strewn with bits of wreck and drift: some redwood and spruce logs, no less than two lower masts of junks, and the stern-post of a European ship—all of which we looked on with a shade of serious concern, speaking of the dangers of the sea and the hard case of castaways. In this sober vein we made the greater part of the circuit of the island; had a near view of its neighbour from the southern end; walked the whole length of the westerly side in the shadow of the thicket; and came forth again into the moonlight at the opposite extremity.

On our right, at the distance of about half a mile, the schooner lay faintly heaving at her anchors. About half a mile down the beach, at a spot still hidden from us by the thicket, an upboiling of the

birds showed where the men were still (with sailor-like insatiability) collecting eggs. And right before us, in a small indentation of the sand, we were aware of a boat lying high and dry, and right side up.

Nares crouched back into the shadow of the bushes.

'What the devil 's this?' he whispered.

'Trent,' I suggested, with a beating heart.

'We were damned fools to come ashore unarmed,' said he. 'But I 've got to know where I stand.' In the shadow, his face looked conspicuously white, and his voice betrayed a strong excitement. He took his boat's whistle from his pocket. 'In case I might want to play a tune,' said he grimly, and thrusting it between his teeth, advanced into the moonlit open, which we crossed with rapid steps, looking guiltily about us as we went. Not a leaf stirred; and the boat, when we came up to it, offered convincing proof of long desertion. She was an eighteen-foot whaleboat of the ordinary type, equipped with oars and thole-pins. Two or three quarter-casks lay on the bilge amidships, one of which must have been broached, and now stank horribly; and these, upon examination, proved to bear the same New Zealand brand as the beef on board the wreck.

'Well, here 's the boat,' said I; 'here 's one of your difficulties cleared away.'

'H'm,' said he. There was a little water in the bilge, and here he stooped and tasted it.

'Fresh,' he said. 'Only rain-water.'

'You don't object to that?' I asked.

'No,' said he.

'Well, then, what ails you?' I cried.

'In plain United States, Mr. Dodd,' he returned, 'a whaleboat, five ash sweeps, and a barrel of stinking pork.'

'Or, in other words, the whole thing?' I commented.

'Well, it's this way,' he condescended to explain. 'I've no use for a fourth boat at all; but a boat of this model tops the business. I don't say the type's not common in these waters; it's as common as dirt; the traders carry them for surf-boats. But the *Flying Scud*? a deep-water tramp, who was lime-juicing around between big ports, Calcutta and Rangoon and 'Frisco and the Canton River? No, I don't see it.'

We were leaning over the gunwale of the boat as we spoke. The captain stood nearest the bow, and he was idly playing with the trailing painter, when a thought arrested him. He hauled the line in hand over hand, and stared, and remained staring, at the end.

'Anything wrong with it?' I asked.

'Do you know, Mr. Dodd,' said he, in a queer voice, 'this painter's been cut? A sailor always seizes a rope's end, but this is sliced short off with the cold steel. This won't do at all for the men,' he added. 'Just stand by till I fix it up more natural.'

'Any guess what it all means?' I asked.

'Well, it means one thing,' said he. 'It means Trent was a liar. I guess the story of the *Flying Scud* was a sight more picturesque than he gave out.'

Half an hour later the whaleboat was lying astern of the *Norah Creina*; and Nares and I sought our bunks, silent and half-bewildered by our late discoveries.

THE WORKS OF
R. L. STEVENSON

THE WRECKER

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